

COVID-19 statements & press releases from law enforcement and regulators (as of 30/03/20)

Legend: AGS – An Garda Síochána (AGS); Central Bank of Ireland (CBI); Charities Regulator (CR); Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg); Companies Registration Office (CRO); Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC); Criminal Assets Bureau* (CAB); Data Protection Commissioner (DPC); Department of Justice (DoJ); Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); European Banking Authority (EBA); European Central Bank (ECB); Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO); Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI); Garda National Economic Crime Bureau* (GNECB); Health and Safety Authority (HSA); Health Product Regulatory Authority (HPRA); Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement* (ODCE); Pensions Authority* (the PA)

* Yet to publish a press release/statement

Regulator	Date	Title of Statement/Press Release	Key Statements
An Garda Síochána (AGS)			
AGS	Undated	'Social Distancing' - Contacting An Garda Síochána	<p>All Public Offices of Garda stations remain open. However, if you need to contact An Garda Síochána please consider the following:</p> <p>In an emergency always dial 999/112 - You should use this service if a crime or incident is happening now or if anyone is in immediate danger.</p> <p>Non-emergency or general enquiries:</p> <p>For non-emergency or general enquiries, you can contact your local Garda Station by Telephone and Email.</p> <p>Contact details for all Garda stations and key offices are available in the Garda Stations Directory</p>
AGS	Undated	Coronavirus Scam Warning	An Garda Síochána would like to make the public aware of the possibility for fraudsters exploiting the spread of Covid-19 Coronavirus to carry out scams either online or in person. The main types of scams include Phishing, Social Engineering Scams and Fraudulent Selling/Trading.
AGS	20 March 2020	NIB Registration Office at Burgh Quay Has Closed	The Garda National Immigration Bureau Registration Office at Burgh Quay has closed. The Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) website contains a notice setting out the measures for Immigration and International Protection permissions to reside in the State that are due to expire between 20/3/2020 and 20/5/2020. All such permissions that are due to expire from 20/3/2020 to 20/5/2020 are automatically renewed by the Minister for Justice and Equality for a period of two months. For more information, please see here: http://www.inis.gov.ie/

Central Bank of Ireland (the CBI)			
CBI	4 March 2020	Statement: COVID-19 Virus	<p>CBI is closely monitoring the evolving situation and expects regulated firms to have appropriate contingency plans in place to be able to deal with major operational events.</p> <p>CBI is ready to work with its counterparts in the ECB and across the wider central banking community to take appropriate and targeted measures, as necessary.</p>
CBI	13 March 2020	Statement by the Governor of the Central Bank of Ireland, Gabriel Makhoul	<p>Refers to the series of measures introduced by the ECB's Governing Council on 12 March 2020 aimed at supporting households and firms.</p> <p>CBI expects banks to use the positive effects of these measures to support the economy and not to increase dividend distributions or variable remunerations.</p>
CBI	18 March 2020	Statement: Central Bank of Ireland	<p>CBI has decided to release a capital buffer that banks are required to hold in order to support the continued provision of credit to households and businesses, by the banking system, during this challenging time. This buffer, the Counter Cyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB), is a time-varying capital requirement and will be reduced from 1% to 0% no later than 2 April 2020.</p> <p>The CBI expects banks to use the positive effects of these measures <u>solely</u> in support of the economy and not for dividend distributions.</p>
CBI	19 March 2020	Focused on protecting consumers and supporting individuals and firms in financial difficulty - Central Bank of Ireland	<p>CBI have stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no impediment to banks introducing 3-month Covid-19 payment breaks. CBI expects all regulated firms, including banks, retail credit and credit servicing firms to take a consumer-focused approach and to act in their customers' best interests. • Consumer protection framework will ensure consumer interests protected. • Resilience of the system in the short, medium and long term needs to be ensured so it can serve consumers and the wider economy.
CBI	23 March 2020	Opinion by Governor Gabriel Makhoul in Sunday Independent	<p>Opinion piece which was published in the Sunday Independent on 22 March 2020.</p> <p>States that "<i>The Central Bank of Ireland, working with other central banks and regulators across Europe, is playing its part to reduce the economic harm to businesses and households in the country. Our mission is to serve the public interest by safeguarding monetary and financial stability and by working to ensure that the financial system operates in the best interests of consumers and the wider economy. Believe me when I say that we, too, will spare no effort to contain the economic effects of the crisis and do everything in our power to protect consumers, households and firms.</i>"</p> <p>Also states that "<i>Banks are introducing three-month payment breaks on mortgages, and personal and business loans, for some business and personal customers affected by COVID-19. We expect that all mortgage lenders, including non-banks, will introduce this measure. We will continue to maintain oversight of the firms we regulate, in line with our mission, to help ensure this happens.</i>"</p>

CBI	27 March 2020	Central Bank of Ireland sets out Expectations of Insurers in Light of COVID-19 Emergency	<p>The CBI has written to the Chairs and CEOs of both life and general insurance firms requiring them to take account of the challenging situation in which many of their customers find themselves and to put forward consumer-focused solutions for insurance payment breaks, policy rebates and claims in light of the emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurers must put forward consumer-focused solutions on policy payment breaks, rebates and claims. • While most insurance policies are clear, if there is a doubt about the meaning of a term, the interpretation most favourable to the consumer should prevail. • The CBI expects the CEOs of Irish authorised firms to take responsibility for the oversight of how their firm is managing determinations of whether claims are covered or not in the context of COVID-19.
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Charities Regulator (CR)

CR	13 March 2020	Tweet	<p>To facilitate staff working remotely during the current health crisis, our phone lines will operate 11am to 4pm Mon-Fri until further notice. Thank you for your patience.</p>
CR	Undated	Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Charities – Frequently Asked Questions	<p>The Charities Regulator is currently open and working on ways to continue our regulatory work and provide supports to Irish charities. However, we are operating with fewer resources and therefore it will take longer than usual for us to answer queries and process applications.</p> <p>The Regulator appreciates the added pressures on many charities at this time. Based on our contacts with charities to date, we are aware of some particular concerns and our responses to these are set out in the FAQs, which will be kept under review and revised and extended as necessary.</p>

Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg)

ComReg	18 March 2020	Update on ComReg operations and Covid-19	<p>In keeping with Irish Government recommendations most of the Commission for Communications Regulation's operations are currently being delivered by staff working remotely.</p> <p>ComReg's premises are closed to the public until further notice.</p> <p>Our phone lines are being answered – please call the main switch for assistance: 01-8049600.</p> <p>ComReg will continue to deliver on its statutory and regulatory functions.</p>
ComReg	19 March 2020	Consumer Line COVID-19 operations update	<p>Our Consumer Line is currently operating as normal and we are continuing to provide our services to you. ComReg's Consumer team is available to assist you with your query and complaint from 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday (excluding public holidays).</p> <p>As our premises is now closed to the public in line with Irish Government recommendations, we are temporarily unavailable to offer an appointment to speak with a member of our Consumer team in person. You can continue to make contact with us through our online and phone services as noted on our webpage.</p>

Companies Registration Office (CRO)

CRO	12 March 2020	Public Office Closure: Thursday 12th March	<p>CRO Public Office on Gloucester Place Lower, Dublin 1 is closed from Thursday 12 March and remains shut indefinitely.</p> <p>CRO Customers should still be able to access CRO online services www.core.ie and our website to order documents and file submissions.</p>
CRO	Undated (March 2020)	Update Regarding Filing of Annual Returns	<p>The Registrar of Companies has decided that all annual returns due to be filed by any Company now and up to 30 June 2020 will be deemed to have been filed on time if all elements of the annual return are completed and filed by that date. This will enable businesses and their financial advisers to focus on the more immediate financial challenges facing them at this time. The situation will be kept under review and the date of 30 June may be extended depending on the situation as it develops.</p> <p>You may also complete the filing as normal using Revenue Online Services (ROS) signatures instead of a signature page.</p> <p>Please continue to file as normal during this period if you are in a position to do so. Annual returns may not be processed within the usual timeframes, however, anything received will be queued and processed as soon as possible.</p> <p>Further information can be found at www.cro.ie, on our Twitter account @CRO_ie or by phoning 1890 220 226, and some Frequently Asked Questions are also listed.</p>
CRO	Undated (March 2020)	CRO Current Position due to Covid-19 Pandemic	<p>Unfortunately, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, the CRO is not in a position to process submissions or answer queries at this time. We will endeavour to keep you updated on our position as changes arise. For further updates please continue to check this website or twitter @cro_ie.</p>
Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC)			
CCPC	28 February 2020	Information regarding Package Travel and COVID-19	<p>CCPC reminded traders involved in the travel sector that they have obligations to travellers under the Package Holidays and Travel Trade Act 1995 ('the 1995 Act'). The 1995 Act has been substantially amended by the European Union (Package Travel and Linked Travel Arrangements) Regulations 2019.</p> <p>CCPC strongly recommends that any trader seek independent legal advice if they are unsure of their obligations.</p>
CCPC	18 March 2020	COVID-19 Temporary Merger Notification Process	<p>In line with Government recommendations and in the interests of ensuring business continuity in the review of notified mergers and acquisitions, the CCPC has put in place a process of delivering operations largely by remote working.</p> <p>The CCPC is encouraging notifying parties where possible to delay filing planned merger notifications until further notice.</p> <p>As of 18 March 2020, the CCPC requests that notification forms and all supporting documents (i.e., material contained in annexes and appendices to the notification form) required by the CCPC be submitted in electronic format by email to mergers@ccpc.ie.</p>
CCPC	20 March 2020	COVID-19 – CCPC Reminds Businesses that Consumer Protection Law Requirements Remain	<p>The CCPC have noted that there is a high demand for hand sanitiser and surgical masks and these are now being sold by traders who do not ordinarily operate in the health and hygiene sector. They are also being sold through different channels including the internet and through social media platforms. The CCPC have noted that there is a heightened risk that some traders may not act in good faith and</p>

may seek to take unfair advantage, which is damaging to consumer welfare particularly vulnerable consumers.

The CCPC is **actively monitoring compliance** with current consumer protection law requirements, including commercial practices which are misleading to consumers, for example, making a representation that a product is able to cure an illness when it cannot.

The **CCPC has identified issues and states that it will take appropriate action** to protect consumers. It encourages any consumer that encounters misleading practices or experiences difficulties with any online trader offering health products for sale to contact the CCPC.

CCPC	23 March 2020	Consumer warning about whatadeal.ie	The CCPC has concerns around the information being provided to customers on the website, which sells hand sanitiser products . The CCPC is closely monitoring the activities of the website and we encourage any consumer that encounters misleading practices or experiences difficulties with whatadeal.ie or any other trader to contact us by visiting ccpc.ie so that we can advise them of their rights.
CCPC	25 March 2020	COVID-19 European Competition Law Joint Statement	On 23 March the ECN issued a joint statement setting out on how to apply the European competition rules during the COVID-19 crisis and explaining how the competition rules are flexible enough to take into account changes in market circumstances such as these.

Data Protection Commissioner (DPC)

DPC	6 March 2020	Data Protection and COVID-19	<p>Measures taken in response to Coronavirus involving the use of personal data, including health data, should be necessary and proportionate. Decisions in this regard should be informed by the guidance and/or directions of public health authorities, or other relevant authorities.</p> <p>In circumstances where organisations are acting on the guidance or directions of public health authorities, or other relevant authorities, it is likely that Article 9(2)(i) GDPR and Section 53 of the Data Protection Act 2018 will permit the processing of personal data, including health data, once suitable safeguards are implemented. Such safeguards may include limitation on access to the data, strict time limits for erasure, and other measures such as adequate staff training to protect the data protection rights of individuals</p> <p>As with any data processing, only the minimum necessary amount of data should be processed to achieve the purpose of implementing measures to prevent or contain the spread of COVID-19. Controllers should also ensure they document any decision-making process regarding measures implemented to manage COVID-19, which involve the processing of personal data.</p>
DPC	25 March 2020	Covid 19 and Subject Access Requests	<p>The Data Protection Commission acknowledges the significant impact of the Covid-19 health crisis which may affect organisations' ability to action GDPR requests from individuals, such as access requests. While the timelines for responding to requests from individuals are set down in law in the GDPR and can't be changed, we recognise that unavoidable delays may arise as a direct result of the impacts of COVID-19.</p> <p>Where an organisation, due to the impact of COVID-19, cannot respond to a request in full or in part within the statutory timelines, they remain under an obligation to do so and should ensure that the request is actioned as soon as possible. For accountability and transparency purposes, the reasons</p>

for not complying with the timelines should be documented by the organisation and clearly communicated to the affected individuals.

While the statutory obligations cannot be waived, should a complaint be made to the DPC, the facts of each case including any organisation **specific extenuating circumstances will be fully taken into account.**

DPC	26 March 2020	Staying safe online during a pandemic	Tips on how to stay safe online and ensure that personal data, particularly sensitive data such as health data, is only shared with or accessed by trusted recipients.
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Department of Justice (DoJ)

DoJ	Updated 24 March 2020	Information regarding the Justice Sector COVID-19 plans	<p>The Department of Justice and Equality continues to work closely with all relevant criminal justice and public health agencies, including An Garda Síochána, the Irish Prison Service, the Courts Service, the Department of Health and the HSE, to adopt measures that are in line with public policy and the evolving situation.</p> <p>The Department has established a cross-functional COVID-19 response team comprising senior officials from within the Department and from the key front-line agencies at this time.</p> <p>We have put in place a coordinated approach to COVID-19 response in relation to, for example, employees' health, welfare and the ability to perform their roles; the provision of information on good respiratory and hand hygiene practices; contingency planning; and response for service provision aligned with HSE guidance, interagency coordination and communication. This team inputs to national structures established to manage the risk of COVID-19.</p> <p><u>The Department is redeploying staff as required to facilitate the provision of essential public services, including redeployment to other Departments / Agencies.</u></p>
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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA	16 March 2020	Covid-19	<p>Following advice issued by the Government to deal with the current Covid-19 outbreak, the Environmental Protection Agency has requested that staff, if possible, work from home until 29 March.</p> <p>The EPA will continue to deliver on our business and statutory functions as best we can and will make every effort to respond to any queries as soon as possible. Given the circumstances, there may be delays in replying to queries.</p>
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European Banking Authority (EBA)

EBA	25 March 2020	Statement on consumer and payment issues in light of COVID19	No obligation to report by 31 March 2020 on readiness to meet SCA requirements for e-commerce card based transactions
EBA	25 March 2020	Further actions to support banks' focus on key operations: postponed EBA activities	Public hearing are postponed and deadlines for data collection are extended

European Central Bank (ECB)

ECB	20 March	FAQs on ECB supervisory measures in reaction to the coronavirus	In order to alleviate the supervisory burden on bank operations as much as possible the ECB is postponing certain deadlines and decisions.
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Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO)

FSPO	Undated	FSPO Measures in Response to COVID-19	<p>The FSPO continues to operate, however in support of measures directed by the Government of Ireland, to implement social distancing, the FSPO's office at Lincoln Place, Dublin 2 is currently closed to all visitors and members of the public. Where appropriate, staff are working from alternative locations.</p> <p>Formal documentation including preliminary decisions and legally binding decisions, will be issued to the parties by way of email, where possible. Companies wishing to make deliveries to the office are asked to telephone us at 01 567 7000, to make arrangements.</p> <p>In the current exceptional circumstances, and on a temporary basis, the FSPO will accept a pdf, by way of formal response to a Summary of Complaint, subject to the proviso that the relevant complainant has confirmed details to the FSPO of an email address for communication.</p>
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Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)

FSAI	Updated 23 March 2020	COVID-19 (Coronavirus)	<p>In response to the evolving COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak, the FSAI is monitoring the situation closely and is following official Government advice. Our staff are either working from home or from the office. We have cancelled all meetings for the moment and these will be rescheduled either in the future or held by some other means (e.g. teleconference).</p> <p>Our focus is to continue to operate business as usual, where possible, whilst protecting the health of our staff and our colleagues.</p> <p>Our advice-line and reception are operating by email only.</p> <p>Our out-of-hours emergency contact details continue to operate as normal.</p>
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Health and Safety Authority (HSA)

HSA	11 March 2020	COVID 19 – Advice for Employers	<p>Exposure to COVID-19 may present a health risk to workers and other persons at a workplace. Therefore, employers are required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that an appropriate assessment of the risk for COVID-19 in their workplace is carried out. Suitable control measures should be identified and implemented to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection. These measures should be communicated to all relevant employees and others at the place of work.</p> <p>Control measures will depend on the level of risk and type of workplace.</p>
HSA	13 March 2020	FAQ's for Employers and Employees in relation to Home-Working on a temporary basis (COVID-19)	Frequently asked questions and answers to help employers determine whether working from home is suitable and for employees to prepare a workspace in their home.

HSA	13 March 2020	COVID-19 Additional HSA FAQs	A continuation of the above.
Health Product Regulatory Authority (HPRA)			
HPRA	12 March 2020	Covid-19 – Cancellation of all upcoming face-to-face meetings at the HPRA offices	<p>HPRA is taking action to reduce workplace contacts at our offices on Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2. This includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The implementation of remote working practices for our staff where feasible; and 2. The cancellation of all face-to-face meetings scheduled to take place in our offices between now and Sunday 29 March 2020. <p>HPRA is also cancelling routine compliance inspections at the sites of regulated companies until Sunday 29 March 2020 but will remain in ongoing contact with industry stakeholders. Should we believe an urgent inspection is necessary, the HPRA will follow public health advice in relation to any required precautions.</p> <p>If you need to contact us at the HPRA, then please continue to do so as normal during office hours via e-mail or phone. If you have any specific regulatory queries linked to Covid-19, please e-mail covid19@hpra.ie inserting Covid-19 in the subject line.</p>
HPRA	18 March 2020	COVID-19: Business Continuity Update	<p>As of Monday, 16 March 2020, many HPRA staff are working remotely. Our focus is to continue to operate business as usual, where possible, while protecting the health of our staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>Please correspond with us by e-mail using existing HPRA staff e-mail contacts or via relevant mailboxes listed on our website. Otherwise, please contact us at info@hpra.ie and we will redirect your e-mail accordingly. Until further notice, our main phone line (+353 1 676 4971) is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, closed between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm.</p>
HPRA	26 March 2020	Contacting the HPRA during the COVID-19 response	<p>The vast majority of HPRA staff are currently working remotely. This is in line with government advice which aims to slow down the spread of the infection.</p> <p>During this period, please correspond with us by e-mail using existing HPRA staff e-mail contacts or via relevant mailboxes. Please also see additional details, including emergency contacts, on our Contact Us page.</p> <p>Until further notice, our main contact phone number is unavailable. We also request that you do not correspond with us by post as we will have limited access to physical mail sent to our offices.</p> <p>We have implemented business continuity measures to maintain HPRA operations and ensure minimal disruption to services. Our focus is to continue to operate business as usual, where possible, while protecting the health of our staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>A limited number of staff will be present at our offices to ensure continuity of critical business processes which have to be performed on site. Since last week, all face-to-face meetings have been cancelled and will be conducted by phone where possible.</p> <p>Our plans are being continually reviewed and we will update you as the situation develops.</p> <p>For the latest COVID-19 regulatory advice and information relating to health products, see hpra.ie/covid19</p>

Revenue			
Revenue	13 March 2020	Revenue announce measures to assist SMEs experiencing cash flow difficulties arising from COVID-19	<p>Information for SMEs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Returns: businesses experiencing temporary cash flow difficulties should continue to send in tax returns on time. • Application of Interest: the application of interest on late payments is suspended for January/February VAT and both February and March PAYE (Employers) liabilities. • Debt Enforcement: All debt enforcement activity is suspended until further notice. • Tax Clearance: current tax clearance status will remain in place for all businesses over the coming months. <p>Information on importing goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs: critical pharmaceutical products and medicines will be given a Customs 'green routing' to facilitate uninterrupted importation and supply. <p>Businesses, other than SMEs, who are experiencing temporary cash flow or trading difficulties should contact the Collector-General's office on (01) 7383663. Alternatively, these businesses can engage directly with their branch contacts in Revenue's Large Corporates Division or Medium Enterprises Division.</p>
Revenue	16 March 2020	Revenue changes date for payment of Local Property Tax (LPT) to 21 May	<p>Property owners who are due to pay Local Property Tax (LPT) on 21 March 2020:</p> <p>For property owners who opted to pay their LPT for 2020 by Annual Debit Instruction or Single Debit Authority payment, the deduction date will change from 21 March 2020 to 21 May 2020.</p> <p>Property owners who have opted to make a payment by Annual Debit Instruction or Single Debit Authority do not need to advise Revenue or take any action. The payment date will be changed automatically to 21 May 2020.</p>
Revenue	18 March 2020	Revenue changes the collection of stamp duty on credit cards to July	<p>Stamp duty on credit cards will not be collected until 1 July 2020. Individual credit card holders do not need to take any action.</p>
Revenue	18 March 2020 (first published)	Revenue to operate COVID Employer Refund Scheme on behalf of DEASP	<p>The scheme, launched 19 March 2020, will allow employers to make the special support payment of €203 per week to their employees through their normal payroll process.</p> <p>The weekly amount of €203 paid to employees under the scheme is not subject to tax, USC or PRSI.</p> <p>Under the scheme, employers will be reimbursed for amounts paid to employees and notified to Revenue via the payroll process. The reimbursement will be transferred into the employer's bank account by Revenue, generally on the next banking day following the submission of the payroll details</p>