

COVID-19– BOARD MEETINGS

25th May 2020

Dear Member,

The Government's public health restrictions have now begun to ease. The question of holding face to face board meetings naturally arises.

At the time of the restrictions being introduced, ICOS communicated to you our recommendation that the optimum balance between public health and co-operative governance could best be achieved through holding board meetings through video or teleconference means (see 'COVID-19 - Board Meetings' issued 23rd March).

As of 18th May, the easing of restrictions has commenced (Phase 1). The Government's Roadmap for exiting the restrictions is not prescriptive on a time scale for boards or management to conduct business in person. It does, however, emphasise the need to:

- (i) Exercise caution in determining necessity (i.e. is it necessary to meet in person?) and
- (ii) Act with a risk based approach in terms of facilities, personnel and hygiene/ distancing, etc.

In summary, it is for each Board/ Committee of Management to determine when exactly it is appropriate to resume physical board meetings. Your co-operative board will need to appraise its own specific circumstances - individual and collective judgment will be critical. Directors might determine that the nature of a particular decision necessitates a physical meeting. If that is the case, ICOS recommends that you proceed with holding that meeting only after consulting the Return To Work Safely Protocol which your co-operative should now be considering in the context of workers and other stakeholders returning on site (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>). ICOS is on hand to offer assistance in respect of the above. Please contact James Doyle on james.doyle@icos.ie or Darragh Walshe on dwalshe@icos.ie

Please further note that on the wider point of return to work for executive and operational staff a Return To Work Training Programme for staff (and the COVID-19 responsible person function) will launch in the next two weeks.