

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Site Operating Procedures – Protecting our workforce



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As part of our system review, this document is valid until April 2021		

1 Introduction

Construction/depot/project sites operating during the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic need to ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

This guidance is intended to introduce consistent measures on sites of all sizes in line with the Government's recommendations on [social distancing](#).

These are exceptional circumstances and the industry must comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus at all times.

The health and safety requirements of any construction type activity must not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available or social distancing being implemented, it must not take place.

We are aware that emergency services are also under great pressure and may not be able to respond as quickly as usual. Please ensure first-aid requirements on site are not compromised and be aware of the location of your local Automatic Emergency Defibrillator ([AED locations](#)) if not on site / in your vehicle.

Sites should remind the workforce before work commences every day and at all break times of the Site Operating Procedures which are aimed at protecting them, their colleagues, their families and the UK population.

If a site is not consistently implementing the measures set out below, it may be required to shut down.

2 Self-Isolation

Anyone who meets one of the following criteria should not come to site:

- Has a high temperature or a new persistent cough - follow the [guidance on self-isolation](#)
- Is a [vulnerable person](#) (by virtue of their age, underlying health condition, clinical condition or are pregnant)?
- Is living with someone in [self-isolation](#) or an [extremely vulnerable](#) or [vulnerable person](#). **Please read the information in these links before deciding what action to take.**

3 Procedure if someone falls ill

If a worker develops a high temperature or a persistent cough while at work, they should:

- Return home immediately
- Avoid touching anything
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed.

Additional NED Guidance

- If an employee is unwell at work with symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow the guidance above and notify their line manager. If safe to do so, they should be sent home and follow the self-isolating guidance from the NHS
- If there is a concern that their symptoms are severe, call NHS 111 for advice

4 Travel to site

Wherever possible workers should travel to site alone using their own transport and sites need to consider:

- Parking arrangements for additional cars and bicycles
- Other means of transport to avoid public transport e.g. cycling
- Providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if water is not available
- How someone taken ill would get home.

Own vehicles should not be used for business use without the appropriate business insurance cover.

Note: commuting to and from work will be covered by personal insurance as this is not classed as business use

The following simple steps will help staff minimise the risk of contamination to anyone using works vehicles:

- Avoid all non-essential travel both by private or works vehicle
- Keep the time spent in the vehicle to a minimum – do not stop off or take the “long route” to site
- All vehicle keys should be sanitized at the start and end of shift
- At the start of shift, clean the external handles and locks / catches on the vehicle with soap and water. If this is not practicable, then open external door handles using either a gloved hand, disinfectant wipes or disposable paper towel
- Remember to sanitize items of work equipment that may be used in the cabin of the vehicle such as mobile phones, tablets and cameras. Avoid passing these between occupants or using these inside the vehicle unless essential
- Inside works vehicles, wear a “clean” pair of nitrile gloves – Ensure they have adequate grip and dexterity to allow safe driving. DO NOT wear your work gloves.
- Sit as far apart within the vehicle cabin as possible. If 2 people are sharing a vehicle with front and rear seats (e.g. a car, welfare van or double crew cab) then one person should sit in the rear seat diagonally opposite the driver
- Keep the windows at least partially open whilst travelling and the climate control system switched to blow external air to ensure continuous air change within the cabin area
- During the day, sanitize your hands regularly either by handwashing with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) or using hand sanitizer if available, every time you get into or out of the vehicle, every time you blow your nose, sneeze or cough, eat or handle food
- Where possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands and avoid touching the vehicle after sneezing or coughing until you have sanitized your hands
- If available, use disinfectant wipes to sanitize any areas of the vehicle that hands may typically touch including the steering wheel, gear stick, handbrake, indicator and wiper control arms, beacon switches, door handles, seat belts and buckles, window buttons, mirrors, stereo and climate control buttons
- If wipes are not available, soap and water may be used but ensure it does not get into the vehicles electrical systems and thoroughly dry items like the steering wheel before driving. Chlorine based cleaning products should only be used in accordance with the relevant COSHH assessment
- Always sanitize your hands after cleaning your vehicle - if your hands are dirty, you are putting germs right back onto that clean surface
- Aim to sanitise the vehicle at least 3 times a day – start of shift, before lunch and end of shift

- Do not eat or drink in the vehicle. Do not store food or drink directly on any surface in the cab unless you know that part of the cab and the food packaging has been cleaned beforehand
- Ensure you have a supply of clean tissue / paper towel and a waste bin/bag in your vehicle. Catch your cough or sneeze in a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin and sanitize your hands. Remove the bin bag at the end of your shift and dispose of it
- After exiting the vehicle, remove your clean gloves and leave them on a cleaned surface in the cabin
- Put on your work gloves and close the door using the outside of the door only – do not touch the inside of the vehicle. At the end of shift, take your clean gloves out of the vehicle with you and sanitize the external surface of the gloves by washing with soap and water.

5 Site access points

The following should be implemented at site access / egress points:

- Stop all non-essential visitors
- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact
- Monitor site access points to enable social distancing – you may need to change the number of access points, either increase to reduce congestion or decrease to enable monitoring
- Remove or disable entry systems that require skin contact e.g. fingerprint scanners. One person should be employed to collect names of persons entering and leaving sites at an access point
- Require all workers to wash or clean their hands before entering or leaving the site
- Allow plenty of space (at least **two metres**) between people waiting to enter site
- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas e.g. scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets, desks, particularly during peak flow times
- Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow it and must wash or clean their hands before unloading goods and materials.

6 Hand washing

- Provide dedicated hand washing facilities in addition to the usual welfare facilities if on a large footprint site or there are significant numbers of personnel on site
- Ensure soap and fresh water is always readily available
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

7 Toilet facilities

- Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time e.g. use a welfare attendant
- Stop using urinals, please use the toilet cubicles. Alternatively, close off alternate urinals to ensure social distancing measures can be maintained
- Wash hands before and after using the facilities
- Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush
- Portable toilets should be avoided wherever possible, but where in use these should be cleaned and emptied more frequently
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

8 Canteens and eating arrangements

With cafés and restaurants having been closed across the UK, canteens cannot operate as normal.

Whilst there is a requirement for construction/operational/depot sites to provide a means of heating food and making hot drinks, these are exceptional circumstances and where it is not possible to introduce a means of keeping equipment clean between use, kettles and microwaves etc. must be removed from use.

The workforce should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it and not use local shops.

- Dedicated eating areas should be identified on site to reduce food waste and contamination
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area
- The workforce should be asked to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles from home
- Workers should sit 2 metres apart from each other whilst eating and avoid all contact- this may be 1 person per table
- Where catering is provided on site, it should provide pre-prepared and wrapped food only
 - Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible
 - Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should be either disposable or should be brought by individuals from home and returned with them at the end of the working day for washing etc

- Drinking water should be provided, with enhanced cleaning measures for the tap mechanism
- Tables should be cleaned between each use
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices.

9 Changing facilities, showers and drying rooms

- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day
- Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible
- Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time to maintain a distance of two metres
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal
- If possible workforce to take work clothes home to wash / clean there.

10 Avoiding close working

There will be situations where it is not possible or safe for workers to distance themselves from each other by 2 metres.

General Principles:

- Non-essential physical work that requires close contact between workers should not be carried out
- Work requiring skin to skin contact should not be carried out
- Plan all other work to minimise contact between workers
- Re-usable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use and not shared between workers
- Single use PPE should be disposed of so that it cannot be reused
- Stairs should be used in preference to lifts or hoists
- Where lifts or hoists must be used:
 - Lower their capacity to reduce congestion and contact
 - Regularly clean touchpoints, doors, buttons etc.
- Increase ventilation in enclosed spaces
- Regularly clean the inside of vehicle cabs and between use by different operators.

Site meetings:

- Only essential meeting participants should attend, otherwise by conference call / Skype etc.
- Attendees should be two metres apart from each other
- Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation
- Consider holding meetings in open areas where possible.

Additional NED Guidance

Photograph attendees (as a group) as evidence of attendance rather than signing in, one person to keep a register of attendance (names, roles) – signed by person delivering

11 Cleaning

Enhanced cleaning procedures should be in place across the site, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including:

- Taps and washing facilities
- Toilet flush and seats
- Door handles and push plates
- Hand rails on staircases and corridors
- Lift and hoist controls
- Machinery and equipment controls
- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- Telephone equipment
- Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment

Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

For further guidance, please refer to [SHEMS-GUI-GR-10 Coronavirus Government Cleaning Guidance.pdf](#)