CORONAVIRUS

Site Operating Procedures – Protecting Our Workforce

Contents

Introduction

These are exceptional circumstances and the industry must comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus (Covid-19) at all times.
These Site Operating Procedures (SOP) are based on Government guidance on Working safely during Coronavirus (Covid-19) - Construction and other outdoor work; other restrictions and advice may apply in Scotland, Wales and **Northern Ireland.**
The HSE is the relevant enforcing authority for occupational health and safety legislation and guidance to control public health risks in the construction sector. If a site is not consistently implementing the measures set out by the Government, it may be subject to enforcement action.

Construction 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 includes considering how personnel travel to and from site.

This guidance is intended to introduce consistent measures on construction sites of all types and sizes in line with the Government's guidelines on social distancing and ensure employers and individuals make every effort to comply.

Government guidance for employers in England states "*where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff*".

The health and safety requirements of any construction activity must not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely, it should not take place.

Emergency services are also under great pressure and may not be able to respond as quickly as usual. This should be taken into consideration in the planning of work activities, first aid, fire and emergency responses.

Organisations must have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance.

CORONAVIRUS

Sites should also remind the workforce at every opportunity of the Site Operating Procedures which are aimed at protecting them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

When to Travel to Work

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy advised in a letter to the UK construction industry on 31 March 2020:

"That wherever possible, people should work at home. However, we know that for many people working in construction their job requires them to travel to their place of work, and they can continue to do so. This is consistent with the Chief Medical Officer's advice".

It is important to understand the following guidelines by which workers should or should not travel to work as outlined below.

Social distancing	Workers in the construction industry should follow the guidance on Staying alert and safe (social distancing). Where they cannot work from home, they must follow guidance on Staying safe outside your home while travelling to and from work and while at work.
Self-isolation	Anyone who: • Has a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell; • Is within 14 days of the day when the first member of their household showed symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19); or • Has been contacted by the NHS Test & Trace Service; should not come to site, but must follow the guidance on self-isolation.
Person at increased risk	Anyone who is clinically vulnerable to Coronavirus (Covid-19) should follow the latest guidance for clinically vulnerable people and Working safely during Coronavirus – Construction and other outdoor work (section 2.1).
Persons defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable	Anyone identified as clinically extremely vulnerable will be advised by their health authority and must follow the latest guidance on Protecting people who are clinically extremely vulnerable from Covid-19.
Living with a person in one of the above groups	Anyone living with a person who is at increased risk of severe illness, or an extremely vulnerable person who is shielding from Coronavirus (Covid-19), should stringently follow the guidance on social distancing and minimise contact outside the home.
If someone falls ill	If a worker develops a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell while at work, they should: • Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed • 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 should get a Coronavirus (Covid-19) test. They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until they have received a negative test result or, in the event of a positive test result, their period of self-isolation has been completed.

Travel to Work

Wherever possible workers should travel to site alone using their own transport.

If workers have no option but to share transport:

● Journeys should be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time.

● Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other may help to reduce the risk of transmission.

● The vehicle should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with particular emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.

Sites should consider:

- Parking arrangements for additional vehicles 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 soap and water are not available
- How someone taken ill would get home
- Where public transport is the only option for workers, you should consider:
- Changing and staggering site hours to reduce congestion on public transport
- Avoid using public transport during peak times (05:45 - 7:30 and 16:00 - 17:30)

Driving at Work

When travelling at work or between site locations, workers should travel alone. If workers have no option but to share a vehicle, then they should follow the Government guidance on Working Safely during Covid-19 in or from a vehicle.
Workers should maintain a distance of two metres, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable. Risk mitigations include:
● Share with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time

● Maintain good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and face away from each other during the journey

● Wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available before entering and after getting out of the vehicle

● Avoid touching their faces

● Regularly clean the vehicle using gloves and standard cleaning products, with particular emphasis on handles and other surfaces which may be touched during the journey.

Site Access and Egress Points

● Stop all non-essential visitors

● Consider introducing staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times

● Plan site access and egress 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, including in the case of emergencies

● Introduce one-way systems

● Allow plenty of space between people waiting to enter site

● Use signage:

o such as floor markings, to ensure two metre distance, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable, is maintained between people when queuing

o reminding workers not to attend if they have symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) and to follow guidelines

● Require all workers to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water when entering and leaving the site

● Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas e.g. entry systems, scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets and desks, particularly during peak flow times

● Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible

● Where loading and offloading arrangements on site will allow it, drivers should remain in their vehicles. Where drivers are required to exit their vehicle, they should wash or sanitise their hands before handling any materials and must have access to welfare facilities

● Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

Hand Washing

- Provide hand washing facilities to the usual welfare facilities.
- Provide additional hand washing facilities (e.g. pop ups) to the usual welfare facilities, particularly on a large spread out site or where there are significant numbers of personnel on site, including plant operators.
- Ensure soap and fresh water is readily available and kept topped up at all times.
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable (Sanitiser must contain 60% alcohol to be affective).
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and paper towel levels.
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Toilet Facilities

● Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time and use signage, such as floor markings, to ensure two metre distance, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable, is maintained between people when queuing

● Wash or sanitise 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 cleaned and emptied more frequently

● Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Canteens and Eating Arrangements

Where possible, workers should be encouraged to bring their own food. They should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it and avoid using local shops.
Where there are no practical alternatives, workplace canteens may remain open to provide food to staff with appropriate adjustments for social distancing. Canteens should provide a takeaway service providing pre-prepared and wrapped food only.

● Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible

● The capacity of each canteen or rest area should be clearly identified at the entry to each facility, and where necessary attendants provided to supervise compliance with social distancing measures

● Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times

● Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced

● Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly, using standard cleaning products e.g. kettles, refrigerators, microwaves

● Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance to any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area

● A distance of 2 metres should be maintained between users wherever possible. Seating and tables should be reconfigured to reduce face to face interactions

● All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up

● Tables should be cleaned between each use

● Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used unless they are disposable or washed and dried between use

● Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible

● Canteen staff should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food

● Canteen staff and workers may use the same rest areas if they apply the same social distancing measures

● Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms

● 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, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable.

● Restrict the number of people using these facilities at any one time e.g. use a welfare attendant

● Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times

● Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day

● Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

Work Planning to Avoiding Close Working

In line with Government guidance, where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff.
Sites and work need to be planned and organised to avoid crowding and minimise the risk of spread of infection by following Government guidance and the advice within these Site Operating Procedures.
Sites should remind the workforce (e.g. at daily briefings) of the specific control measures necessary to protect them, their colleagues, families and the UK population.

Hierarchy of Controls

The Government's guidelines on social distancing refer to 'one metre plus' which is defined in Working safely during Coronavirus (Covid-19) – Construction and other outdoor work as *"two metres or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable"*.
Mitigations could include installing screens, making sure people face away from each other, handwashing facilities, minimising the amount of time spent with people outside your household or bubble, and being outdoors.
If you are not able to work whilst maintaining a two metre distance, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable, you should consider whether the activity should continue and, if so, risk assess it using the hierarchy of controls below and against any sector-specific guidance. The results of risk assessments should be shared with the workforce and this poster displayed in the workplace.

CORONAVIRUS

Eliminate	• Workers who are unwell with symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) should not travel to or attend the workplace • Rearrange tasks to enable them to be done by one person, or by maintaining social distancing measures (2 metres) • Avoid skin to skin and face to face contact • Stairs should be used in preference to lifts or hoists and consider one ways systems • Consider alternative or additional mechanical aids to reduce worker interface ***Site Meetings*** • Only absolutely necessary meeting participants should attend • Attendees should be at least 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
Reduce	Where the social distancing measures (2 metres) cannot be applied: • Minimise the frequency and time workers are within 2 metres of each other • Minimise the number of workers involved in these tasks • Workers should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face • Regularly clean common touchpoints, doors, buttons, handles, vehicle cabs, tools, equipment etc. • Increase ventilation in enclosed spaces • Workers should wash their hands before and after using any equipment
Isolate	Keep groups of workers: • Together in teams e.g. (do not change workers within teams) • As small as possible • Away from other workers where possible
Control	• Consider introducing an enhanced authorisation process • Provide additional supervision to monitor and manage compliance
PPE	Sites should not use RPE for Coronavirus (Covid-19) where the two metre social distancing guidelines are met. • Coronavirus (COVID-19) needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and the hierarchy of control and not through the use of PPE • Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against Coronavirus (COVID-19). The Government has provided information on Face Coverings in section 6.1 of its guidance **Working safely during coronavirus (Covid-19) - Construction and other outdoor work**.
Behaviours	The measures necessary to minimise the risk of spread of infection rely on everyone in the industry taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours. Please encourage an open and collaborative approach between workers and employers on site where any issues can be openly discussed and addressed.

First Aid and Emergency Service Response

The primary responsibility is to preserve life and first aid should be administered if required and until the emergency services attend.

- When planning site activities, the provision of adequate first aid resources must be agreed between the relevant parties on site
- Emergency plans including contact details should be kept up to date
- Consideration must also be given to potential delays in emergency services response, due to the current pressure on resources

CORONAVIRUS

- Consider preventing or rescheduling high-risk work or providing additional competent first aid or trauma resources.

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
- Machinery and equipment controls
- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- Laptops and printers
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.