



COVID-19

This guidance is to update ECA Members on the latest guidance from Government on the COVID-19 outbreak.

The UK Government is supporting businesses and their employees through a package of measures during this period of unprecedented disruption. The [Business Support website](#) helps businesses find the right support, advice and information to help with the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the [support measures that are available](#). This website will continue to be updated as information becomes available.

Some aspects of business support are devolved. Specific information for businesses and employers in [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#), and [Wales](#) is available.

1. Businesses and premises which must be closed & sites opening

The guidance on businesses which have been ordered to close can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close>

The Government position (as of 24.03.20) is that construction (including FM/maintenance) can continue, subject to meeting essential conditions*.

*The current view of the Construction Leadership Council is that work should only continue if:

- it can be carried out under the guidance issued by Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-distancing-in-the-workplace-during-coronavirus-covid-19-sector-guidance#construction> - For advice for business in other nations of the UK please see guidance set by the [Northern Ireland Executive](#), the [Scottish Government](#) and the [Welsh Government](#).
- it can be undertaken without any compromising on safety and health;
- it's done in accordance with the new Site Operating Procedure (SOP) (<http://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/news/site-operating-procedures-during-covid-19/>);

The CLC Site Operating Procedure aims to show consistent measures for sites of all sizes that are in line with the Government's recommendations to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, notably but not exclusively, on social distancing. CLC says that the health and safety requirements of any construction activity must not be compromised, and if an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available, or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place.

The original Site Operating Procedure (SOP) was issued by the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) on 23 March. On the morning of 2 April, the CLC issued a second version of the SOP. However, due to immediate and adverse feedback from parts of the industry, the second version was retracted by CLC within a matter of hours and replaced by the original version (once again), with immediate effect. Version 2 will however have been applicable for the few hours it was live, until the original SOP once again became the applicable version. We will update this page when a new or updated version of the SOP is published by CLC.

Contractors taking actions based on version 2 during the intervening period should seek legal advice).

- workers can travel safely and responsibly to sites.

Those businesses which remain open do so subject to employers ensuring their employees, whether in offices or on site, are able to follow Public Health England guidelines including, where possible, maintaining a 2 metre distance from others, and washing their hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds (or using hand sanitiser gel if soap and water is not available).

Tradespeople and working in people's homes

You are a tradesperson carrying out essential repairs and maintenance in people's homes. You can continue work, providing that you are well and have no symptoms. You should notify all clients in advance of your arrival.

On entry to the home you should wash your hands using soap and water for 20 seconds. You should wash your hands regularly, particularly after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing, and when leaving the property. Where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used, and you should carry this with you at all times.

You should maintain a safe distance (at least 2 metres) from any household occupants at all times and ensure good ventilation in the area where you are working, including opening the window.

No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless your work is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, such as emergency plumbing or repair.

No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild.

Construction

Construction work plays an important role in ensuring public safety and the provision of public services. It can continue if done in accordance with the social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

Where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the site to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

If you decide the work should go ahead, you should advise staff to wash their hands frequently using soap and water for 20 seconds, and especially after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing, on arrival at work, before and after eating, after using public transport, and when they arrive home. Where facilities to wash hands are not available, hand sanitiser should be used.

You should still advise staff to keep 2 metres apart as much as possible.

You should plan work to minimise contact between workers and avoid skin-to-skin and face-to-face contact. Where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible.

As much as possible, keep groups of workers working together in teams that are as small as possible (cohorting). For example, you keep vehicle crews working together, rather than mixing crew members on different shifts.

Staff should also wash their hands each time before getting into enclosed machinery (such as diggers) with others, and wash their hands every time they get out. To help with this, you should consider adding additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities, providing soap, water and/or hand sanitiser.

Employees should keep the windows of enclosed machinery or enclosed spaces open for ventilation and be careful to avoid touching their face at all times. The inside of cabs should be regularly cleaned, particularly between use by different operators.

You should try to use stairs in preference to lifts or hoists. Where lifts or hoists must be used, you should lower their capacity to reduce congestion and contact at all times, and regularly clean touchpoints, such as doors and buttons.

To protect your staff, you should remind colleagues daily to only come into work if they are well and no one in their household is self-isolating.

The Construction Leadership Council has published more [detailed advice](#) on how you might carry out government guidance.

Transport businesses - Use of private vehicles and car pooling

When using a private vehicle to make a journey that is essential, cars should only be shared by members of the same household. Those who normally share a car with people who are not members of their own household for a journey that is essential, e.g. getting to work, should consider alternatives such as walking, cycling and public transport where you maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.

If the journey is essential, such as travel to work, and there is no option but to share a car with people who are not part of the same household, 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. Private vehicles that are used by people from multiple households should be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products with particular emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.

[Read further advice for staff in the transport sector.](#)

Manufacturing and processing businesses

Manufacturing plays an important role in the economy. It can continue if done in accordance with the social distancing guidelines wherever possible.

Where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to continue to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between staff.

If you decide the work should continue, staff should work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face if possible.

You should increase the frequency of cleaning procedures, pausing production in the day if necessary for cleaning staff to wipe down workstations with disinfectant.

You should assign staff to the same shift teams to limit social interaction.

You should not allow staff to congregate in break times; you should consider arrangements such as staggered break times so that staff can continue to practice social distancing when taking breaks.

You should communicate to all staff that they should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more at the beginning and end of every break, when they arrive at work and before they leave. To help with this, you should consider adding additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities, providing soap, water and/or hand sanitiser.

When entering and leaving, you should ensure your workforce stays 2 metres apart as much as possible. To protect your staff, you should remind colleagues daily to only come into work if they are well and no one in their household is self-isolating.

General guidance for employers can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

[Guidance for temporary site suspension from the Construction Leadership Council can be found here](#)

http://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CLC_Advice-on-temporary-suspension-of-sites.pdf



ECA, Rotherwick House, 3 Thomas More Street, St. Katharine's & Wapping, London E1W 1YZ
Tel: 020 7313 4800 Email: info@eca.co.uk www.eca.co.uk

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