



COVID-19 Risk considerations

Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 was introduced with the aim of securing the health, safety and welfare of all persons at work. This means that employers have a responsibility to provide and maintain a working environment that has, so far as is reasonably practicable, adequate facilities and arrangements for the welfare of employees at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places responsibility upon employers to undertake suitable and sufficient assessment of risks to health and safety. The COVID-19 pandemic means that contractors are currently operating in unprecedented circumstances, and there are a number of areas that need careful consideration when protecting employees during these unsettling times.

The Government are currently advising that people, except for essential workers, should stay at home because there is a direct risk to life from COVID-19. However, where attending site is deemed necessary, the Government guidelines should be considered and implemented.

Before Employees Attend Site

When asking any employee to undertake work it is important to consider having in place the following:

- Up to date contact information and emergency contact details for employees
- Clear channels of communication to ensure that employees remain updated on the actions being taken to protect them
- Clear channels of communication to ensure that employees are aware of the changes to their normal working practices and safe systems of work
- Measures to protect those who are most vulnerable, and those who may be living with someone who is shielding from COVID-19

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Before Employees Attend Site *(continued)*

Before attending site, it is important to consider having in place the following:

- The correct contact details of the Client or Principal Contractor
- Arrangements for gaining safe access to the site
- Letter of Authority from the Client, or a Risk Assessment determining why the work is necessary
- Confirmation from the Client that they are operating in line with the current CLC Site Operating Procedures
- Confirmation from the Client that they are implementing the current Government advice on Social Distancing
- Procedures in place for any employees showing signs of COVID-19 whilst at work

Travelling To and From Site

When employees travel to and from site, the following measures should be considered:

- Travelling alone and using their own transport (*where employees from the same household are working together it would be acceptable for them to travel together*)
- Wiping down all areas in the vehicle that have been touched
- Avoiding public transport where possible
- Walking or cycling to site, if this is reasonable
- Altering working hours to accommodate travelling outside of peak commuting times
- Adhering to social distancing measures and keeping 2 metres apart
- Providing hand sanitiser, or soap and a water container for hand washing
- Encouraging the use of gloves and face masks
- Encouraging the isolation of external working clothes, where they are not stored at work

The Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974 places duties upon employers to conduct their work in a way that ensures, so far as is reasonably practicable, that individuals not in their employment who may be affected are not exposed to risks to their health or safety. On the majority of construction sites, the Main Contractor and Client have responsibilities to protect those working on their site.

Signing In and Induction

When employees are signing in and out of the site, the following measures should be considered:

- Staggered entry and exit times to reduce congestion
- Adhering to social distancing measures and keeping 2 metres apart
- Signing in and out using your own pen
- Washing your hands upon entry and exit of site
- Undertaking site inductions remotely via video calling or online

Site Meetings

Site meetings should only be held when necessary, with only the meeting participants in attendance, the following measures should be considered:

- Undertaking meetings remotely via video calling or online
- Consider holding meetings outside in open areas where possible
- Adhering to social distancing measures, where possible, and keeping 2 metres apart
- Where held inside meeting rooms should be well ventilated to allow fresh air circulation

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Working Onsite

The health and safety requirements of while working must not be compromised, if the work cannot be undertaken safely it should not take place. When employees are undertaking necessary work onsite, the following measures should be considered:

- Planning work to minimise contact with other site users (*this could include altering shift patterns or restricting access to work areas*)
- Adhering to social distancing measures and keeping 2 metres apart (*while working on scaffolding this would be approximately one bay apart vertically, or every other lift horizontally*)
- Using stairs in preference to lifts
- Using your own tools and equipment
- Canteens will not be operating as normal (*breaks should be staggered, employees should bring their own prepared meals and drinks, and workers should adhere to social distance measures of keeping 2 metres apart*)
- Soap and water should be readily available, and where this is not possible hand sanitiser should be provided
- Sufficient waste bins should be available for handtowels, and must be regularly removed and disposed of
- Additional supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels may be required, and should be securely stored

Personal Protective Equipment

When providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to employees, the following measures should be considered:

- Gloves should be considered a minimum precaution
- Where RPE is prescribed the user should be face fit tested
- Re-useable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use, and must not be shared between workers
- Single use PPE should be disposed of to ensure that it is not reused

References

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 – [full document](#)

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – [full document](#)

Construction Leadership Council Site Operating Procedures (Version 1) – [full document](#)

Guidance on Shielding and Protecting People Defined on Medical Grounds as Extremely Vulnerable from COVID-19 – [full document](#)

Guidance on Social Distancing for Everyone in the UK – [full document](#)

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