Emergency COVID-19 'Coronavirus' Arrangements for Site Operatives and Office Staff

How COVID-19 spreads

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects -such as desks, tables or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If they are standing within one meter of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. In other words, COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu.

Most persons infected with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms and recover. However, some go on to experience more serious illness and may require hospital care. Risk of serious illness rises with age: people over 40 seem to be more vulnerable than those under 40. People with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious illness.[1]

Prevention & Treatment

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, Heightsafe Systems recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

1. All employees should always self-distance (minimum 2m space)

1. All employees who can work from home, should work from home.

2. Avoid close contact with people who are sick or showing symptoms

3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

4. Stay home when you are sick.

5. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin

6. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or antiseptic wipe

7. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and upon entering or exiting premises

    a. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

8. Office staff should consider how to identify persons who may be at risk, and support them, without inviting stigma and discrimination into the workplace. This could include persons who have recently travelled to an area reporting cases, or other personnel who have conditions that put them at higher risk of serious illness (e.g. diabetes, heart and lung disease, older age).

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[1] Coronavirus. (n.d.). WHO | World Health Organization. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Advice to Site-Operatives

While satellite working:

1. Employees should regularly wash their hands for a minimum of 30 seconds using soap and water/regularly hand sanitize with the facilities provided.

2. Employees should stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing.

3. Employees should self-distance as per government guidelines (2m).

4. Employees should make the necessary steps to contact their Line Manager if they feel ill while working remotely, prior to starting work.

5. Employees should comply with instructions from local the authorities they are traveling to. If, for example, they are told by local authorities not to go somewhere they should comply with this. Employees should comply with any local restrictions on travel, movement or large gatherings.

6. Wear protective PPE based on the dynamic risk assessment carried out at the point of work. The company has made provided each remote worker with the required PPE

7. Vehicles are to be wiped down at the end of each day, including handles, dashboard, steering wheel etc

Following the Construction Leadership Council Guidelines – If the operatives cannot follow the social distancing guidelines in full in relation to a particular activity, you should consider whether the activity needs to continue for the site to operative, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.

Sites and work need to be planned and organised to avoid crowding and minimise the risk of spread of infection by following PHE and HSE 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

If you are not able to work whilst maintaining a two metre distance, 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.

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 • Lower the worker capacity of lifts and hoists to reduce congestion and contact at all times • 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 that have to work within 2 metres: • Together in teams e.g. (do not change workers within teams) • As small as possible • Away from other workers where possible
Control	Where face to face working is essential to carry out a task when working within 2 metres: • Keep this to 15 minutes or less where possible • Consider introducing an enhanced authorisation process for these activities • 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.

	• Where it is not possible to maintain a two metre distance, each activity should be risk assessed using the hierarchy of controls and against any sector-specific guidance, mindful that masks (RPE) are the last resort in the hierarchy • 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 • Where personnel are required to work in specific environments (e.g. where persons are shielding, with symptoms, or confirmed Coronavirus (Covid-19) cases may be present e.g. healthcare or in a home environment) additional PPE should be considered specific to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) risk
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

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

Returning from satellite work:

1. Employees who have returned from an area where COVID-19 is spreading should monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days and take their temperature twice a day.

2. Anyone with even a mild cough or low-grade fever (37.3 C or more) should self-isolate at home. They should also stay home (or work from home) if they must take simple medications, such as paracetamol/acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin, which may mask symptoms of infection

3. This means avoiding close contact (two metres or nearer) with other people, including family members. They should also telephone their healthcare provider or the local public health department, giving them details of their recent travel and symptoms.

This Emergency Statement will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary. The Emergency Statement has been approved and authorised by:

Steve Ellis
Group Health and Safety Manager
May 18th, 2020