

# Construction Sector - Site Operating Procedures

## Protecting Your Workforce During Coronavirus (Covid-19)

The Site Operating Procedures have always reflected the latest Government guidance.

Whilst the Government's [Living with COVID-19](#) plan is clear that the pandemic is not yet over, the removal of the Working Safely during Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance, along with the health and safety requirement for employers to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments, from 1 April 2022 means that the Site Operating Procedures are no longer current and remain available as a reference document.

The [Use of Face Coverings in Construction](#) also remains available as a reference document.

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## Introduction

Covid-19 will be a feature of our lives for the foreseeable future and needs to be managed to reduce the risk of transmission.

These Site Operating Procedures (SOP) are based on Government guidance on [Working safely during Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) - Construction and other outdoor work in England](#); other restrictions and advice may apply in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#), as well as in areas subject to a localised lockdown.

**The objective is to ensure consistent measures on construction sites of all types and sizes.**

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 complying with the latest Government guidance on Covid-19, it may be subject to enforcement action.**

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

Where Covid-19 measures are in place, organisations should remind the workforce of them during inductions and daily briefings and have effective monitoring arrangements in place to ensure compliance.

## Travelling

### Sharing Vehicles

If workers share transport, they should try to:

- Share with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time
- Keep the windows open
- Travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow
- Maximise the distance between people
- Wear a face covering
- Clean the vehicle between journeys, especially touch points, using gloves and standard cleaning products.

### Using Public Transport

If workers use public transport, they:

- Should try to avoid travelling during peak times (05:45 - 08:15 and 16:00 - 17:30); and
- Should comply with the face covering requirements of the transport operator.

### Sites should consider:

- Changing and staggering site hours to reduce congestion on public transport
- Parking arrangements for additional vehicles and bicycles
- Providing facilities such as lockers and showers
- 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.

## Site Access and Egress Points

- Minimise non-essential visitors
- Consider introducing staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact
- Plan and manage site access and egress points to minimise contact and ensure current social distancing requirements are met – 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:
  - such as floor markings, to minimise contact and ensure current social distancing requirements are maintained between people when queuing
  - reminding workers not to attend site if they have symptoms of Covid-19
- 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
- Manage 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, delivery 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
- [Drivers](#) must be provided with access to suitable toilet and hand washing facilities and made aware of the social distancing measures in place
- Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

## Hand Washing

- Allow regular breaks to wash hands
- 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 adequate supplies of soap and fresh water are readily available and kept topped up at all times
- Provide hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

## Toilet Facilities

- Manage the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time (e.g. use a welfare attendant) and use signage, such as floor markings, to minimise contact and maintain current social distancing requirements
- 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 Rest Areas

- Confirm whether face coverings should be worn in canteens and rest areas - the latest position can be found in [The Use of Face Coverings in Construction](#)
- Ensure that the number and size of facilities available on site are sufficient to minimise contact and maintain current social distancing requirements
- The capacity should be clearly identified at the entry to each facility, and where necessary attendants provided to supervise compliance
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact
- 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

- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- Tables and chairs should be cleaned between each use
- Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should be disposable or washed and dried between each 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
- Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

### Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms

- Ensure that the number and size of facilities available on site are sufficient to minimise contact and maintain current social distancing requirements
- Manage 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
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of these 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.

### Close Working

#### Hierarchy of Controls

Sites and work need to be planned and organised to avoid crowding and minimise the risk of spread of infection.

If you are not able to avoid contact whilst working, 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.

<p><b>Eliminate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers who have Covid-19 symptoms or a positive test result should not travel to or attend site</li> <li>• Rearrange tasks to enable them to be done by one person, or in a way that maintains current social distancing requirements</li> <li>• Avoid skin to skin contact and face to face working</li> <li>• Stairs should be used in preference to lifts or hoists and consider one-way systems</li> <li>• Consider alternative or additional mechanical aids to reduce worker interface</li> </ul> <p><b>Site Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only necessary meeting participants should attend</li> <li>• Attendees should maintain current social distancing requirements</li> <li>• Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation</li> <li>• Hold meetings in open areas where possible</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduce</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise the frequency and time workers are working together</li> <li>• Minimise the number of workers involved in tasks</li> <li>• Workers should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face</li> <li>• Manage the number of people in lifts and hoists to reduce congestion and contact</li> <li>• Regularly clean common touchpoints, doors, buttons, handles, vehicle cabs, tools, equipment etc.</li> <li>• Increase ventilation in enclosed spaces</li> <li>• Wash or sanitise hands before and after using any equipment</li> </ul>

<b>Isolate</b>	Keep groups of workers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together in teams e.g. do not change workers within teams</li> <li>• As small as possible</li> <li>• Away from other workers where possible</li> </ul>
<b>Control</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider introducing an enhanced authorisation process</li> <li>• Provide additional supervision to monitor and manage compliance</li> </ul>
<b>PPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-19 needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and the hierarchy of controls and not through the use of PPE</li> <li>• Sites should not encourage the precautionary use of PPE to protect against Covid-19</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviours</b>	<p>The measures necessary to minimise the risk of spread of infection rely on everyone in the industry taking responsibility for their actions and behaviours</p> <p>Encourage an open and collaborative approach between workers and employers on site where any issues can be openly discussed and addressed</p>

### 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
- Consider potential delays in emergency services response due to the current pressure on resources
- Consider providing additional competent first aid or trauma resources for high-risk activities.

### Cleaning

Enhance cleaning procedures 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
- Canteens and rest areas which must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices.
- Telephone equipment
- Key boards, photocopiers and other office equipment
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.