Construction Scotland

Working on site during the COVID-19 pandemic – Construction Guidance
(based on the Construction Leadership Council’s Site Operating Procedures)

Introduction

Essential construction sites operating during the COVID-19 pandemic need to ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

This guidance is intended to ensure the adoption of appropriate measures on sites of all sizes, in line with current recommendations on social distancing.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this document, all contractors and personnel must comply with the latest Scottish and UK Government advice or direction on the prevention of spread of Coronavirus at all times.

The health and safety requirements of any construction activity, which require the implementation of Safe Systems of Work established through Risk Assessments, must not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel or supporting resources required to provide a safe system of work, it should not take place.

Site access, layout, welfare facilities, logistics and operations must be risk assessed and planned to ensure that social distancing recommendations are followed. If there are operations that cannot be undertaken within the parameters of social distancing, then they must not take place until a specific risk assessment has been completed and appropriate control measures implemented.(see below under Development of controls).

Development of controls

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and other relevant legislation continue to apply to any construction project carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic and all contractors or principal contractors have a duty to take account of the health and safety risks to everyone affected by the work (including members of the public) in planning, documenting and managing the measures needed to control those risks. Risk assessment and the communication and implementation of appropriate control measures is a fundamental requirement of the above legislation.

Such measures need to take into account the nature of the site, the work to be performed, the number of people working on the site and other local factors and be documented in a Construction Phase Plan, including risk assessments and method statements (RAMS).
The specific risks of working during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated control measures, including social distancing requirements, must therefore be considered and documented in Risk Assessments by contractors, in compliance with their normal health and safety management procedures.

Should an operation be identified in a Risk Assessment that cannot be undertaken within the parameters of social distancing, contractors must first of all seek to Eliminate the risk completely by looking for other ways to complete the task. If this is not possible, they must seek to Reduce the risk by changing the means used to carry it out; to Isolate it (for example by erection of a screen or barrier) and/or introduce strictly enforced Controls. If all of these measures fail to eliminate the risk completely then specialist advice must be sought on the appropriate form of PPE to be used to protect workers from infection. All of these measures must be documented in a method statement and briefed to the workforce through toolbox talks and other means of communication.

Information and Guidance on the risk posed by COVID-19 and potential control measures

(extracted from “COVID-19 Information and Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings” Version 3.7 published by Health Protection Scotland)

For updated guidance visit: https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/

What is the risk of COVID-19?

The risk is of site personnel, visitors or the general public contracting the coronavirus COVID-19

COVID-19 is spread by droplets. This is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2 metres) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk of infection transmission increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person. Respiratory secretions, from the coughs and sneezes of an infected person, are most likely to be the main means of infection transmission.

There are two routes by which COVID-19 can be spread:
- Directly; from close contact with an infected person (within 2 metres) where respiratory secretions can enter the eyes, mouth, nose or airways. This risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person who has symptoms.
- Indirectly; by touching a surface, object or the hand of an infected person that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching own mouth, nose, or eyes.

How long can the virus survive on environmental surfaces

This depends on a number of factors, for example the surface the virus is on; whether that surface is exposed to sunlight; environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity; and exposure of the surface to decontamination products e.g. detergents and disinfectants. Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is
likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours. We know that similar viruses, are transferred to and by people’s hands and therefore frequent hand hygiene and regular decontamination of frequently touched environmental and equipment surfaces will help to reduce the risk of infection transmission.

**General advice on control measures applicable to all work sites.**

All sites should have measures in place for:

- Routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g. telephones, keyboards, door handles, desks and tables).
- Ensure regular environmental cleaning is done.
- Promote frequent hand hygiene by making sure that staff, contractors, service users and visitors have access to hand washing facilities and where available alcohol-based hand rub.
- Ensure staff have the space to allow for appropriate distancing between colleagues when working/moving around. This can include marking on the ground to encourage people to stand 2m back from staff and ensuring staff have appropriately staggered breaks.
- Ensure good ventilation by keeping windows open where possible and not closing doors for small rooms (unless someone is presenting symptoms – see section 1.6 about responding to someone falling ill at work).
- Individuals should
  - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds.
  - Use alcohol-based hand rub where available if no access to soap and water.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Not come to work if they or a household member has symptoms of COVID-19 (follow the stay at home guidance).
  - Follow the social distancing advice.
  - Wherever possible, avoid direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoid using their personal items such as their mobile phone.
  - Cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping and blowing the nose. Dispose of all used tissues promptly into a waste bin. If you don’t have any tissues available, they should cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.

**Specific advice on control measures to be considered for inclusion in site specific Risk Assessments for COVID-19,** dependent upon the size of project and the number of personnel involved.

**Provision of PPE and cleaning products**

Before commencing any works, all necessary PPE (as identified by the Risk Assessment) and cleaning products, including soap and water and hand sanitisers (where available) must be available to every worker. If this is not the case, then work should not commence until resolved.
Travel to Site

- Wherever possible workers should travel to site alone using their own transport and sites must consider, where necessary:
  - Parking arrangements for additional cars
  - Other means of transport to avoid public transport
  - Where compounds are established, providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if water is not available
  - How someone taken ill would get home.

Site Access Points (if relevant)

- Stop all non-essential visitors
- Issue specific guidance for deliveries
- On larger sites Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times
- Where feasible, monitor site access 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
- Remove or disable entry systems that require skin contact e.g. fingerprint scanners
- Require all workers to wash or clean their hands before entering and leaving the site
- Allow plenty of space (two metres) between people waiting to enter site
- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas e.g. scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets, desks, particularly during peak flow times
- Reduce the number of people in attendance at site inductions
- Inductions – induction rooms must be carefully managed to ensure social distancing or inductions held on site in open air if possible. Adoption of ‘Honda factory’ 2m grid for all briefings etc
- Toolbox talks – daily toolbox talks on CV-19 to reiterate site operating procedures and inform of any change to site procedures
- Drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow it and must wash or clean their hands before unloading goods and materials.
- Fire evacuation procedures – consideration to be given to how to quickly evacuate and maintain social distancing, and how to distance at a muster point

Movement around the site

One-way systems - flow of people around the workplace in stairs and corridors consider being one way.
Perimeter Access Scaffolding consider one way systems for vertical travel additional stair towers to be installed.
This will require effective communication to all on site

Hand Washing
· Provide additional hand washing facilities to the usual welfare facilities if a large spread out site or significant numbers of personnel on site
· Ensure soap and fresh water is readily available and kept topped up at all times
· Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
· Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels
· Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal. Sites will need extra supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels and these should be securely stored.
· Tools – Sharing of tools to be prohibited unless PPE or other measures can prevent contact
· A resilient supply of water, electricity and means for heating water is essential.

Toilet Facilities

· Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time – “one in/one out” controls must be used
· Wash 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 avoided wherever possible, but where in use these should be cleaned and emptied more frequently
· Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

First Aid on site

· Consider how to provide first aid to a person who may become injured due to a work activity – including protection of both the worker and the first aider(s) and appropriate PPE required

Canteens and Eating Arrangements

Whilst there is a requirement for construction sites to provide a means of heating food and making hot drinks, these are exceptional circumstances and where it is not possible to introduce a means of keeping equipment clean between use, kettles, microwaves etc. must be removed from use and workforce be asked to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles.

The workforce should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it.

· Dedicated eating areas should be identified on site to reduce contamination
· Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times
· Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area
Workers should sit 2 metres apart from each other whilst eating and avoid all contact (additional canteen facilities may be necessary)

Where catering is provided on site, it should provide pre-prepared and wrapped food only
- Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible
- Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used
- Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced
- Tables should be cleaned between each use
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices.

Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms (where provided)

- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times
- This may require “one in/one out” arrangements dependent upon the size of unit
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day
- 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
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

Site Meetings

- Only absolutely necessary meeting participants should attend
- Use Skype, facetime, etc to avoid visitors to site
- Attendees should be 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.

Cleaning

Enhanced cleaning procedures must be in place across the site, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including, where applicable:
- 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
- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- 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.
• Task appropriate glove wearing is mandatory

Maintenance of a stock of consumables to maintain cleanliness is essential

**Self-isolation**

Anyone who meets one of the following criteria should not come to site:

- Has a high temperature or a new persistent cough – follow the guidance on self-isolation
- Is a vulnerable person (by virtue of their age, underlying health condition, clinical condition) or are pregnant
- Is living with someone in self-isolation or a vulnerable person

**Procedure if someone falls ill**

If a worker develops a high temperature or a persistent cough while at work, they should:

- Return home immediately
- Avoid touching anything
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in the bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow
- They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed
- Contact to be made with next of kin
- Advise Employer of developing condition

If a worker on site is diagnosed with COVID-19, the site must cease all operations until a cleaning and disinfection programme has been completed, in accordance with Health Protection Scotland and IOSH guidelines.