

# COVID-19 Guidance for employees and clients

## Preventing the spread of Coronavirus

Coronavirus is an illness that can affect the lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called COVID-19. Respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. As the virus is now spreading through community transmission in the UK, all employers and workers are being affected in some way. People's health and well-being, and measures to prevent the virus from spreading, should be at the heart of everyone's response.

### What are the symptoms?

The National health Service (NHS) has identified the symptoms as experiencing either:

- A high temperature  
*You feel hot to touch on your chest or back*
- A new continuous dry cough  
*This means you've started coughing repeatedly*
- Shortness of breath (in more severe cases)

### What can we do to prevent the spread?

Managers, supervisors and workers should know and follow the governments hygiene advice; it is good practice to:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser; Aim to wash your hands when you:
  - » Get home or into work, especially when using public transport;
  - » Remove your work gloves at break times; Eat or handle food;
  - » Blow your nose, sneeze or cough;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands or with your gloves on;
- Maintain at least two metres (seven feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing;
- As far as possible, when onsite, avoid close contact with fellow workers, other contractors or members of the public;

**We all have a responsibility to protect ourselves and others from the spread of coronavirus at work, and away from work.**



#### Further guidance

For more information refer to [www.nfrc.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nfrc.co.uk/coronavirus) and [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

### Stay at home if you have coronavirus symptoms

Stay at home if you have either:

- A high temperature—this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature);
- A new, continuous cough—this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).

### How long to stay at home?

- If you have symptoms of coronavirus, you'll need to stay at home for seven days;
- If you live with someone who has symptoms, you'll need to stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms;
- If you live with someone who is 70 or over, has a long-term condition, is pregnant or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 14 days;
- If you have to stay at home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

### Do's and Don'ts

#### Do

- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water often - do this for at least 20 seconds;
- ✓ Always wash your hands when you get home or into work;
- ✓ Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available;
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze;
- ✓ Put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards;
- ✓ Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms of coronavirus;
- ✓ Only travel on public transport if you need to;
- ✓ Avoid social activities, such as going to pubs, restaurants, theatres and cinemas;
- ✓ Avoid events with large groups of people;
- ✓ Use phone, online services, or apps to contact your GP surgery or other NHS services.

#### Don't

- ✗ Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean;
- ✗ Do not have visitors to your home, including friends and family.

# RPE and Protecting against Covid-19

As the construction industry returns to work, we are now debating the best practices to help protect them from the Coronavirus. One hot topic of conversation is whether the use of face mask can protect against the transmission of Covid-19.

Current guidelines from The World Health Organization (WHO) do not recommend the wearing of face masks; the preferred approach is to ensure social distancing and good hygiene measures. WHO currently states that only two groups of people should wear protective masks, those who are:

- Sick and showing symptoms
- Caring for people suspected to have Coronavirus (health workers)

It goes on to say that medical masks should be reserved for healthcare workers. The wearing of masks is not recommended for the general public because:

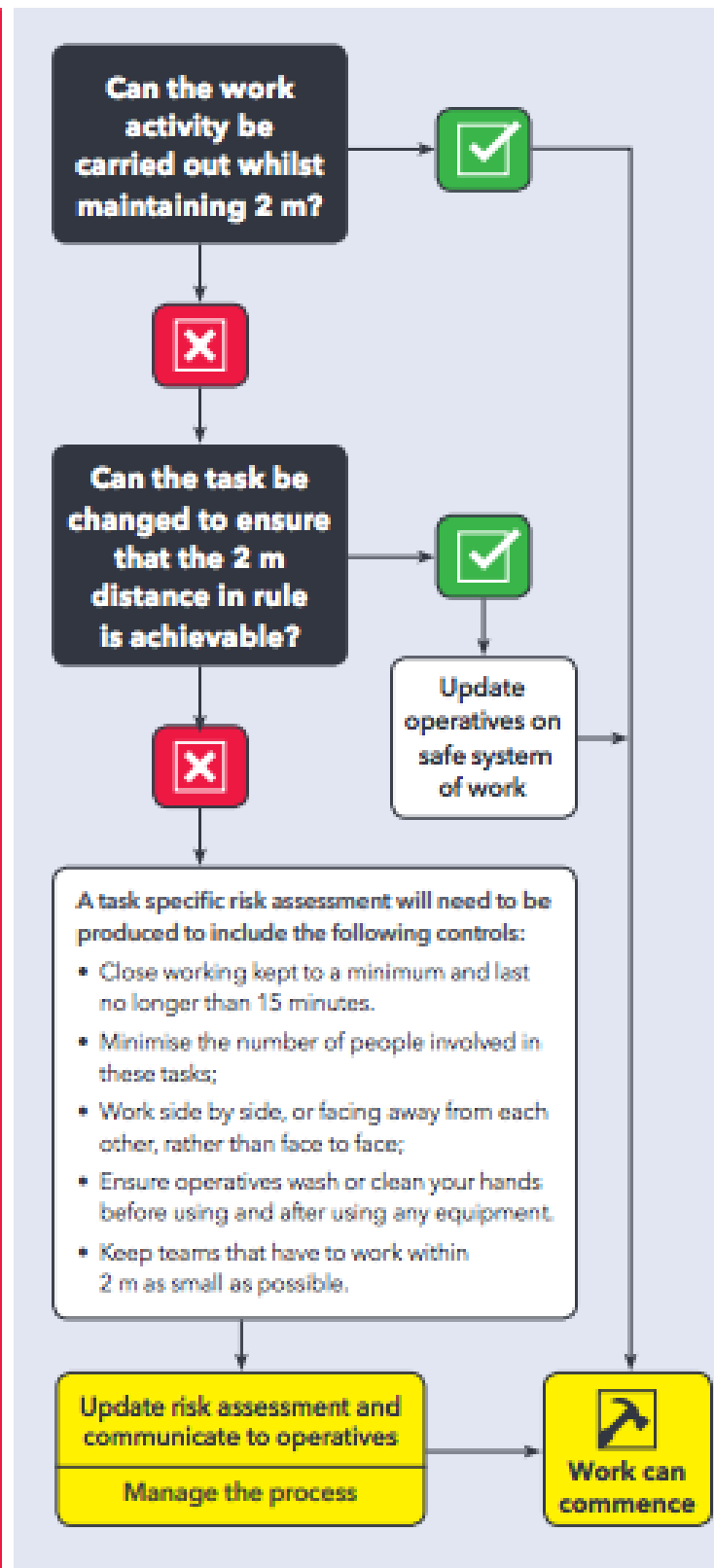
- They can be contaminated by other people's coughs and sneezes, or when putting them on or removing them.
- Frequent hand-washing and social distancing are more effective.
- They might offer a false sense of security.

In the roofing industry we rely on Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) for many different tasks, like protection from dust, but not for virus protection. Currently, all RPE for construction work must be CE marked. There has been no change to that required standard. Filtering Face Piece masks (FFP) have a continuous wear time of less than one hour, after which the wearer should take a break.

As the global shortage of PPE continues, there will be issues around supplies of FFP3 masks and so you may need to prioritise or, through risk assessment, determine what other controls and time exposure limitations could be implemented to manage the risk of operatives working in an environment that requires the use of a face fit mask.

The Construction Leadership Council's (CLC) Site Operating Procedures (SOP) sets out hierarchy of controls where close working cannot be avoided. If it's not possible to eliminate, reduce or isolate the risk, then unless the activity is essential, you should consider whether the activity should continue.

If the activity is essential and there is no other way of maintaining social distancing, then it should be carried out for 15 minutes or less. If it cannot be completed in 15 minutes or less, then you should consider whether it should continue. The flow chart right will help you make an informed decision when planning tasks where operatives will have to work in close proximity.



# Working During the Coronavirus Outbreak

## WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS?

Coronavirus is an illness that can affect the lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called COVID-19. Respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. The virus is likely to pass from person to person in communal areas and where it is not possible to maintain safe distances between persons. This toolbox talk covers the ways to maintain your health while working on construction sites.

## Self-isolation

If you have any one of the following criteria, do not come to site.

- A high temperature or a new persistent cough.
- Are a vulnerable person—by virtue of age, underlying health condition, clinical condition or pregnancy.
- If you live with a vulnerable person and you continue to work, then your work tasks need to be assessed to ensure that it can be undertaken whilst conforming with the public health guidelines.

## Getting to work

- If possible, travel to your place of work on your own.
- If it is not possible to travel to work on your own, then your journeys should be shared with the same individuals. Do not change the occupants that share the vehicle.
- Ensure everyone has cleaned their hands with hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) prior to getting into the vehicle.
- Do not fill the vehicle; leave space in the vehicle so that distance between occupants can be maintained.
- Maintain as much ventilation as possible whilst traveling by opening the windows.
- Have disposable gloves or hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) available in the vehicle to protect/clean your hands in case you need to fill up with fuel during your journey.
- Do not make any unnecessary stops during your journey, ensure that you and your occupants travel to work with what they need.
- When arriving at site, ensure that you and all the occupants of the vehicle wash their hands for 20 seconds using hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) before getting out of the vehicle.
- Clean the inside of your vehicle cab including door handles, steering wheel, gear stick and indicator stalk.
- If you need to utilise public transport to get to your place of work, travel at off peak times.

## On site

- Wash your hands when you arrive on site, regularly throughout the day (especially if you sneeze or cough and after eating or handling food) and again when you leave site.
- Where possible, maintain at least two metres away from other workers. This includes while you are working and during breaks and mealtimes—staggered breaks will help achieve this.
- Stay on site for your breaks. Do not use local shops. Bring your own meals and refillable drinking bottles. Do not share items (for example, cups).
- Only hold meetings and briefings that are absolutely necessary. Ideally, these should take place outdoors, with the minimum number of people and those people should be kept at least two metres apart.
- Hand tools should not be shared between operatives if possible.
- If you are using plant on site if possible dedicate one operative per piece of plant to undertake the daily/weekly checks and to operate the machine ensuring that they clean all touch points at the start of each day, at the end of an operation and at the end of the day.

## Close working

Close working should be avoided where possible:

- Work requiring skin to skin contact should not be carried out.
- Where possible rearrange your tasks to maintain social distancing measures (2 m).
- Stairs should be used in preference to ladders and other multi-contact point access equipment; also consider implementing a one-way system.

Use mechanical lifting aids such as sack barrows, to reduce interface with other workers;

Where the social distancing measures (2 m) cannot be applied:

- Minimise the frequency and time you are within two metres of each other.
- Minimise the number of people involved in these tasks;
- Work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face.
- Regularly clean common touchpoints such as ladders, doors, handles, vehicle cabs, tools, shared tools and equipment.
- Ensure you wash or clean your hands before using and after using any equipment.

### Keep teams that have to work within 2 m:

- Together (*do not change workers within teams*).
- As small as possible.
- Away from other workers where possible.

### Where face to face working is essential to carry out a task when working within two metres:

- Keep this to an absolute minimum.
- Ensure additional supervision to monitor and manage compliance.

### Cleaning

Extra cleaning should be carried out on site, particularly in the following areas:

- Taps and washing facilities.
- Toilet flush and seats.
- Door handles and push plates.
- Handrails on staircases and corridors.
- Ladders and access equipment.
- Lift and hoist controls.
- Machinery and equipment controls.
- Food preparation and eating surfaces.

### What to do if you think you are ill

If you develop a high temperature or a persistent cough while at work, you should:

- Report this to your supervisor.
- Avoid touching anything.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin or, if you do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
- Return home immediately.
- You must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until your period of self-isolation has been completed.



#### Note

These measures are necessary to minimise the risk of spread of the infection and rely on all the workforce to take responsibility of their actions and behaviours.



#### Further guidance

For more information refer to [www.nfrc.co.uk/coronavirus](http://www.nfrc.co.uk/coronavirus) and [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

# Employees at Increased Risk of Covid-19 Returning to Work

On 31 March 2020, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy advised in a letter to the UK construction industry on:

*"...that wherever possible, people should work at home. However, we know that for many people working in construction their job requires them to travel to their place of work, and they can continue to do so. This is consistent with the Chief Medical Officer's advice".*

It is important to understand the following guidelines by which workers should or should not travel to work as outlined below.

<b>Social distancing</b>	Workers in the construction industry should follow the guidance on staying at home and away from others (social distancing <sup>1</sup> ). Where they cannot work from home, they must follow the same principles of social distancing while travelling to and from work and while at work.
<b>Self-isolation</b>	Anyone who either has a high temperature or a new persistent cough or is within 14 days of the day when the first member of their household showed symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) should not come to site, but must follow the guidance on self-isolation <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Person at increased risk</b>	Anyone who is at increased risk of severe illness <sup>1</sup> from Coronavirus (Covid-19) is strongly advised to work at home and should be particularly stringent about following social distancing measures.
<b>Persons defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable</b>	Anyone identified as extremely vulnerable will be advised by their health authority and must follow the guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable people <sup>3</sup> .
<b>Living with a person in one of the above groups</b>	Anyone living with a person who is at increased risk of severe illness, or an extremely vulnerable person who is shielding <sup>3</sup> from Coronavirus (Covid-19), should stringently follow the guidance on social distancing <sup>1</sup> and minimise contact outside the home.
<b>If someone falls ill</b>	If a worker develops a high temperature or a persistent cough while at work, they should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed</li><li>• Return home immediately</li><li>• Avoid touching anything</li><li>• Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin, or if they do not have tissues, cough and sneeze into the crook of their elbow.</li></ul> They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation <sup>2</sup> has been completed.

The above guidance could lead to more questions than it answers for contractors who wish to un-furlough their staff and return to work. The NFRC Technical team has produced this Q&A guidance to help further clarify your responsibilities to your employees. If you are unsure or require any clarity on whether you are complying with the guidance, please contact the NFRC Coronavirus Helpdesk<sup>4</sup>.