



Raising Standards Advancing Safety

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DHF advice to door and gate companies and operatives working during the COVID-19 crisis

For those working on construction sites, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has published **Site Operating Procedures** to implement the Government's social distancing requirements and minimise the risk of spread of infection. These procedures can be accessed here:

<https://builduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Site-Operating-Procedures-23-March-2020.pdf>

Also, CLC stated on 25th March that *"if people cannot get to site whilst complying with the Government's guidance, then they should not do so"*, we can only assume that includes maintaining a minimum 2m distance during travel on public transport, and in vehicles. Any need for overnight accommodation will also need careful consideration.

<https://builduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coronavirus-25-March-2020.pdf>

The current recommendation is that, if sites can comply with these procedures, they may remain open. However, it is possible that the Government will at some point order all construction sites to close.

The door and gate industry may need to carry out essential frontline work to maintain safe and secure access to UK residences, schools, hospitals and businesses; it needs to operate to ensure that people are kept safe and secure in their homes and businesses. The latest information concerning businesses which should close is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>

The industry has updated its advice regarding actions that frontline engineers can take to help protect themselves and their clients during the COVID-19 outbreak. These are based on Government recommendations, which change daily: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

DHF will keep this page as up to date as possible.

Work carried out in dwellings:

Current advice indicates that work including repair and maintenance can continue provided that the operatives are well and free of symptoms.

Guidance available from Public Health England, Public Health Wales, Health Protection Scotland and the Public Health Agency (Northern Ireland) should be followed, including maintaining a 2 metre distance from any household occupants.

No work should be carried out in any premises which are isolating or an individual is being shielded, unless there is a direct threat to safety and the operative is willing to undertake the work.

Key considerations:

- When discussing an appointment with your client, ask if they, or any occupants, are self-isolating, displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, and/or have received a positive diagnosis
- Where the occupants are not self-isolating, displaying any symptoms, and have not been diagnosed with COVID-19, operatives may attend site to undertake essential work, being careful to observe Government guidance, which may require additional PPE, such as disposable overalls, disposable gloves, eye protection, suitable face mask, or temporary wider separation of occupants and operatives, eg other rooms or areas
- Government guidance is continually evolving, but be especially vigilant in safeguarding those persons currently identified as most at risk, such as the over-70's and/or those with underlying health issues
- If the work is inside the building, an additional assessment must be undertaken to balance the risks
- As well as protecting yourself, occupants and other clients, you should also consider the welfare of your colleagues

Practical steps to take when working in the field:

- On the day of the work, call ahead to the client/occupants to ask if they or any occupants have signs of the virus, have been diagnosed, or are self-isolating, or persons currently identified as most at risk, such as the over-70's and/or with underlying health issues, and to check that they are comfortable with your visit taking place
- Explain to the client/occupants what you will be doing, and why, and that you must maintain a safe distance from them (at least 2m or 6 steps away is current Government advice), including when waiting for the occupants to open the door
- Do not shake hands with the client or other occupants
- If the work involves coming inside, ask if the occupants can stay in another room, or well away from the work area(s) whilst the work proceeds and, with permission, ventilate the work area, eg by opening a window

- Advise clients to keep clear of the work area for at least 30 minutes after you leave and then wipe down all surfaces and handles with warm soapy water and disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products they normally use and then wash their hands for at least 20 seconds
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, at the start of the job and after (also during the work). It is recommended to carry your own hand-towel with your equipment. Wash/replace hand-towel at end of each day/shift
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth at all times
- Wear suitable work gloves
- If you feel unsafe or at risk at any point, undertake a personal risk assessment and leave the premises if necessary. You can re-plan for a future date if appropriate, after ensuring everything is made safe
- Avoid client/engineer signatures; use another system using text, email or photographs. An electronic copy can be sent on the day, or at a later date (use and/or sharing of pens, tablets or mobile phones may pose a risk of contamination/infection)

Job completion

- Wipe down equipment, tools and instruments used
- Remove and place into a plastic bag any wipes, disposable gloves and overalls used, whilst trying not to cross-contaminate onto existing clothes or persons
- Do not touch your face
- Ensure you then clean/wash your hands, and where possible/appropriate any reusable PPE (eg safety glasses), using soap and water, or use suitable hand sanitizer on hands before moving to your next job
- At the end of each day and following the appropriate local waste regulations, dispose of any bagged waste in line with any existing business process and/or Government guidance

Note - this guidance is to assist the business/individual, it does not form an official process.

All operators and operatives should update themselves with the current Government advice: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and NHS advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19> and operate accordingly.