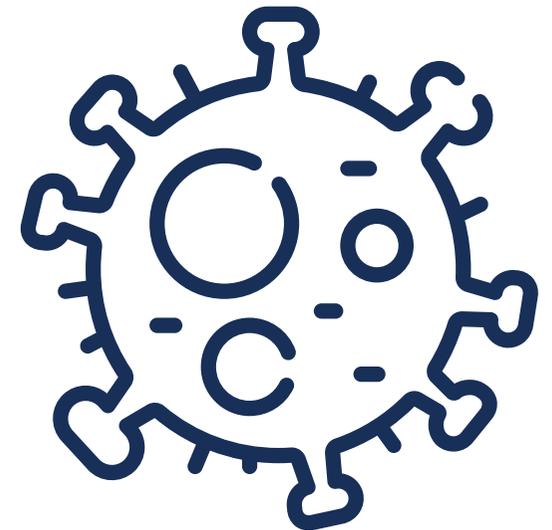




PROVIDING A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT





Hi, I'm Olly...EPVS certifies the processes used by installers to ensure energy saving, generating, and/or storing calculations/estimates for renewable products are accurate and valid. Installers can offer their customers finance by joining EPVS and accessing one of its lenders.



epvs



Hi, I'm Lexi...Flexi-Orb is the oversight body for the renewable and flexible energy sectors. We provide oversight for consumers who are looking to buy products (such as solar, energy storage, heat pumps, electric vehicle charging points etc.) safely. Installers can join Flexi-Orb for free with no annual costs.



 **Flexi-Orb**
consumer safety and protection

FREE POSTERS AVAILABLE...

To help you return to work and minimise the spread of Coronavirus we have put together a range of free posters you can use at work to help:

- Remind your employees and visitors of simple steps to stay safe.
- Keep everyone informed of the required instructions.
- Display throughout your workplace for maximum effect.
- Avoid contracting the virus.
- Remind your employees and visitors contractors, and the general public.

To receive your FREE posters email:

- info@flexi-orb.com or
- info@epvs.co.uk



INTRODUCTION...

The Government has published 'COVID-19 secure' guidelines for employers to help them get their businesses back up and running and workplaces operating safely. This sets out practical steps for businesses focused on 5 key points, which should be implemented as soon as it is practical:

- **Work from home if you can.**
- **Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions.**
- **Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible.**
- **Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk.**
- **Reinforcing cleaning processes.**

We have developed this guide to help employers and employees get back to work in a safe and controlled environment. Each business will need to translate this into the specific actions it needs to take, depending on the nature of their business, including the size and type of business, how it is organised, operated, managed and regulated. The guide will help you towards:

- **Carrying out a COVID-19 risk assessment - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Identifying who should go to work - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Social distancing at work - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Managing your customers, visitors, and contractors - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Cleaning and sanitising the workplace - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Managing your workforce - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Handling inbound and outbound goods - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**
- **Personal protective equipment and face coverings - [JUMP_TO_SECTION](#)**

Disclaimer

This guide should not be used on its own to decide on the actions that you need to take, but as a starting point to consider what you can do. Whilst Flexi-Orb and EPVS endeavour to ensure the content of information is up-to-date at the date of publication, no representation or warranty, express or implied, is made as to its completeness and therefore it is each company's responsibility to comply with the current COVID-19 legislation and related Government guidance. Readers should always undertake their own research and seek appropriate advice from a suitably qualified expert before taking, or refraining from taking, any action.

Public health is devolved in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; any information should be considered alongside local public health and safety requirements and legislation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. For advice to businesses in other parts of the UK please see guidance set by the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government, and the Welsh Government.

Publication date: 1 June 2020 - Version 1

COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT...

To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. This risk assessment must be done in consultation with unions or workers. You must consult with the health and safety representative selected by a recognised trade union or, if there isn't one, a representative chosen by workers. As an employer, you cannot decide who the representative will be. By talking to your workers, you can:

- explain the changes you are making.
- get their thoughts and ideas about how to change the workplace to keep people safe and to ensure those changes are workable.
- continue to operate your business safely during the outbreak.

Risk Assessment Template

[Click here](#) to view an example risk assessment template you can use within your own workplace.

Share the results of your risk assessment

You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. You should also consider publishing results on your website (businesses with over 50 workers would be expected to do so).

Steps to consider:

1. Increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.
2. Make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where this isn't possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines of keeping people 2m apart wherever possible.
3. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff. This includes:

- increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning;
- keeping the activity time involved as short as possible;
- using screens or barriers to separate people from each other;
- using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible;
- reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).

4. Finally, if people must work face-to-face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed partners, then you will need to assess whether the activity can safely go ahead. No one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

WHO SHOULD GO TO WORK...

Everyone should work from home unless they cannot work from home:

- Consider who is needed on site, e.g. workers in critical roles which cannot be performed remotely.
- Plan for minimum number of people needed to be on site to operate safely and effectively.
- Monitor wellbeing of people who are working from home and helping them stay connected to those operating onsite.
- Keep in touch with off-site workers on their working arrangements including their welfare, health, and personal security.
- Provide equipment for people to work from home safely and effectively.

Protect clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals:

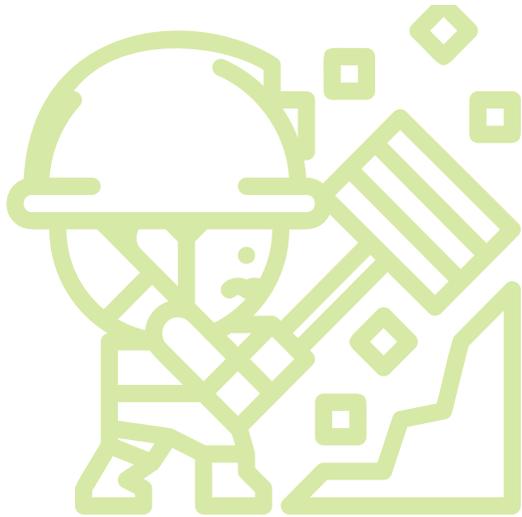
- Clinically extremely vulnerable individuals have been strongly advised not to work outside the home.
- Clinically vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness (for example, people with some pre-existing conditions) have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home, either in their current role or in an alternative role.
- If clinically vulnerable (but not extremely clinically vulnerable) individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the option of the safest available on-site roles, enabling them to stay 2m away from others. If they have to spend time within 2m of others, you should carefully assess whether this involves an acceptable level of risk.
- Particular attention should also be paid to people who live with clinically extremely vulnerable individuals.



Clinically extremely vulnerable people - Refers to people who have specific underlying health conditions that make them extremely vulnerable to severe illness if they contract COVID-19. Clinically extremely vulnerable people will have received a letter telling them they are in this group or will have been told by their GP.

Clinically vulnerable people - Refers to people who may be at increased risk from COVID-19, including those aged 70 or over and those with some underlying health conditions.

WHO SHOULD GO TO WORK...CONTINUED



To make sure individuals who are advised to stay at home under existing government guidance do not physically come to work. This includes individuals who have symptoms of COVID-19 as well as those who live in a household with someone who has symptoms:

- Enabling workers to work from home while self-isolating if appropriate.
- See current guidance ([click here](#)) for employees and employers relating to statutory sick pay due to COVID-19.
- See current guidance ([click here](#)) for people who have symptoms and those who live with others who have symptoms.

Treat everyone in your workplace equally:

- Be mindful of the particular needs of different groups of workers or individuals.
- It is breaking the law to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against anyone because of a protected characteristic such as age, sex or disability.
- Employers also have particular responsibilities towards disabled workers and those who are new or expectant mothers.
- Involve and communicate appropriately with workers whose protected characteristics might either expose them to a different degree of risk, or might make any steps you are thinking about inappropriate or challenging for them.
- Consider whether you need to put in place any particular measures or adjustments to take account of your duties under the equalities legislation.
- Make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled workers being disadvantaged, and assess the health and safety risks for new or expectant mothers.
- Make sure that the steps you take do not have an unjustifiable negative impact on some groups, for example those with religious commitments.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AT WORK...

Maintain social distancing (2m) wherever possible, on arrival and departure and to ensure handwashing upon arrival:

- Stagger arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace.
- Provide additional parking or facilities such as bike-racks to help people walk, run, or cycle to work where possible.
- Reduce congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace.
- Use markings and introduce one-way flow at entry and exit points.
- Provide handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser at entry and exit points.
- Provide alternatives to touch-based security devices such as keypads.
- Define process alternatives for entry/exit points for example deactivating pass readers at turnstiles in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance.
- Provide more storage for workers for clothes and bags.

Maintain social distancing (2m) where possible, while people travel through the workplace:

- Reduce movement by discouraging non-essential trips within sites.
- Restrict access between different areas of a building or site.
- Reduce job rotation and equipment rotation.
- Introduce more one-way flow through buildings. Providing floor markings and signage should remind both workers and customers to follow social distancing wherever possible.
- Use signage such as ground markings to mark out 2m to allow controlled flow of people moving throughout the site.
- Reduce occupancy of vehicles used for onsite travel.
- Separate sites into working zones to keep different groups of workers physically separated.
- Plan site access and 'area of safety' points to enable social distancing.
- Reduce number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible with social distancing.
- Regulate use of high traffic areas including corridors, lifts, turnstiles and walkways.
- Reduce maximum occupancy for lifts, providing hand sanitiser for the operation of lifts and encouraging use of stairs wherever possible.
- Make sure that people with disabilities are able to access lifts.
- Put in place picking-up and dropping-off collection points where possible, rather than passing goods hand-to-hand.
- Keep returned goods from stock to reduce the likelihood of transmission through touch.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AT WORKSTATIONS...

Maintain social distancing (2m) between individuals when they are at their workstations:

- Workstations should be assigned to an individual and not shared. If they need to be shared they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.
- If it is not possible to keep workstations 2m apart then businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate and if so take all mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Review layouts and processes to allow people to work further apart.
- Use floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep a 2m distance.
- Where you cannot move workstations apart, arrange for people to work side by side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face.
- Where you cannot move workstations apart, use screens to separate people from each other.
- Avoid use of hot desks and spaces and, where not possible, for example, call centres or training facilities, cleaning and sanitising workstations between different occupants including shared equipment.

Maintain social distancing (2m) between people who work in one place:

- Change layouts to allow people to work further apart.
- Limit the number of people doing tasks at the same time. This could be limiting the number of people in a work area.
- Use a consistent pairing system if people have to work in close proximity, for example, during two-person working, lifting or maintenance activities that cannot be redesigned.
- Review layouts, line set-ups or processes to allow people to work further apart from each other.
- Use floor tape or paint to mark areas to help workers keep a 2m distance.

Mitigating actions to reduce the risk of transmission between staff when social distancing isn't possible:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- Keep the activity time involved as short as possible.
- Use screens or barriers to separate people from each other.
- Use back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.
- Reduce the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering' (so each person works with only a few others).

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN MEETINGS & COMMON AREAS...

Maintain social distancing (2m) in meetings:

- Use remote working tools to avoid in-person meetings.
- Only absolutely necessary participants should attend meetings and should maintain 2m separation throughout.
- Avoid transmission during meetings, for example, avoid sharing pens and/or other objects.
- Provide hand sanitiser in meeting rooms.
- Hold meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.
- For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.

Maintain social distancing (2m) while using common areas:

- Stagger break times to reduce pressure on break rooms/places.
- Use safe outdoor areas for breaks.
- Work collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites/buildings to ensure consistency across common areas, for example, receptions and staircases.
- Create additional space by using other parts of the workplace freed up by remote working.
- Reconfigure seating and tables to maintain spacing and reduce face-to-face interactions.
- Consider use of social distance marking for other common areas such as toilets, showers, lockers and changing rooms etc.
- Install screens to protect staff in receptions or similar areas.
- Provide packaged meals or similar to avoid opening staff canteens.
- Encourage staff to bring their own food.
- Encourage staff to stay on-site during working hours.
- Regulate use of locker rooms, changing areas and other facilities.
- Encourage storage of personal items and clothing in personal storage spaces, for example, lockers.

Common areas - Refers to areas and amenities which are provided for the common use of more than one person, including canteens, reception areas, meeting rooms, areas of worship, toilets, gardens, fire escapes, kitchens, fitness facilities, store rooms and laundry facilities.

SOCIAL DISTANCING IN VEHICLES...

Maintain social distancing (2m) wherever possible between individuals when in vehicles:

- Avoid multiple occupancy vehicles where safe to do so.
- Vehicles should not be shared if possible.
- If it is not possible to keep a 2m distance in a vehicle, consider additional safety measures.
- Devising mitigation measures where workers have no alternative but to work within 2m to minimise the risk of transmission, including:
 - › Clear signage to outline social distancing measures in place;
 - › Single person or contactless refuelling where possible;
 - › Use physical screening, provided this does not compromise safety, for example, through reducing visibility;
 - › Sit side-by-side not, face-to-face, and increase ventilation where possible.
- Use a fixed pairing system where more than one person is required in the vehicle.
- Make sure vehicles are well-ventilated to increase the flow of air.
- Ensure regular cleaning of vehicles, in particular between users.

Maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the vehicle, especially in high volume situations, for example, distribution centres, despatch areas:

- Schedule to limit exposure to large crowds and rush hours.
- Revise pick-up and drop-off collection points and procedures with signage and marking.
- Where possible and safe have single workers load or unload vehicles.
- Minimise unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse.
- Maximise use of electronic paperwork where possible, and review procedures to enable safe exchange of paper copies where needed, for example, required transport documents.
- Enable drivers to access welfare facilities when required and consistent with other guidance.
- Encourage drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice.

Prioritise safety during incidents

In an emergency, for example, an accident, fire, break-in or trespass, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe. People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

MANAGING YOUR CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS...

Minimise the number of unnecessary visits to the site:

- Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.
- Encourage visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
- Limit the number of visitors at any one time, introducing specific time windows and restricting access to required visitors only.
- Determine if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people.
- Revise visitor arrangements to ensure social distancing and hygiene, for example, where someone physically signs in with the same pen in receptions.
- Maintain a record of all visitors, if this is practical.

Minimise the contact resulting from visits to showroom:

- Define the number of customers that can reasonably follow 2m social distancing within the showroom and any outdoor selling areas.
- Consider an appointments only booking system to visit the showroom.
- Limit the number of customers in the showroom and in any particular congestion areas.
- Encourage customers to visit alone where possible, unless they need specific assistance.
- Remind customers who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should follow social distancing guidelines.
- Look at how people walk through the showroom and how you could adjust this to reduce congestion and contact between customers, for example one-way flow, where possible.
- Ensure any changes to entries, exit and queue management take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including disabled people.
- Use outside premises for queuing where available and safe, for example some car parks.
- Work with your local authority or landlord to take into account the impact of your processes on public spaces such as high streets and public car parks.
- Have clearly designated positions from which colleagues can provide advice or assistance to customers whilst maintaining social distance.

MANAGING YOUR CUSTOMERS, VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS... CONTINUED

Minimise the contact risk resulting from people in vehicles:

- Determine if schedules can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people. For example, when drivers arrive at depots, collection and delivery times and break times.
- Ensure delivery and receipt confirmation can be made contactless and avoid physical contact when handing goods over to the customer.
- Prepare for goods to be dropped off to a previously agreed area to avoid transmission, for example, click and collect type arrangements.
- Maintain a record of all visitors, if this is practical.

Make sure people understand what they need to do to maintain safety:

- Provide clear guidance on social-distancing and hygiene to people on arrival, for example, signage, visual aids, and before arrival, for example, by phone, on the website, by email.
- Provide written or spoken communication of the latest guidelines to both workers and customers.
- Provide signage at entrances to the worksite to remind the public and workers to maintain social distancing.
- Provide signage on rights of way that cross your workplace to remind the public of social distancing.
- Establish host responsibilities relating to COVID-19, providing any necessary training for people who act as hosts for visitors.
- Review entry and exit routes for visitors and contractors to minimise contact with other people.
- Coordinate and work collaboratively with landlords and other tenants in multi-tenant sites, for example, shared working spaces.
- Create social distancing champions to demonstrate social distancing guidelines to customers, if helpful.
- Understand the protocol for collecting and distributing goods across different locations and agreeing these in advance.



CLEANING AND SANITISING THE WORKPLACE...

Make sure that any site or location that has been closed or partially operated is clean and ready to restart:

- Conduct a risk assessment for all sites, or part of sites, that have been closed, before restarting work.
- Carry out cleaning procedures and provide hand sanitiser, before restarting work.
- Check whether you need to service or adjust ventilation systems, for example, so that they do not automatically reduce ventilation levels.
- Most air conditioning systems do not need adjustment, however where systems serve multiple buildings or you are unsure, advice should be sought from your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) engineers or advisers.
- Opening windows and doors frequently to encourage ventilation, where possible.

Keep the workplace clean and prevent transmission by not touching contaminated surfaces:

- Frequent cleaning of work areas and site equipment between uses.
- Frequent cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles and keyboards.
- Clear workspaces and removing waste and belongings from the work area or vehicle at the end of shift.
- Sanitisation of all hand tools, controls, machinery and equipment after use.
- Limit or restrict use of high-touch items and equipment, for example, printers.
- Encourage workers to wash hands before boarding vehicles.
- Retain sufficient quantities of hand sanitiser/wipes within vehicles to enable workers to clean hands after each delivery/drop off.
- If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance ([click here](#)).

CLEANING AND SANITISING THE WORKPLACE...CONTINUED

Minimise the risk of transmission in changing rooms and showers:

- Where shower and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance for showers, lockers and changing rooms to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items and that social distancing is achieved where possible.
- Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities regularly during the day and at the end of the day.

Reduce transmission through contact with objects that come into the workplace, into the showroom and vehicles at the worksite:

- Cleaning procedures for the parts of shared equipment you touch after each use, thinking about equipment, tools and vehicles, for example, forklift trucks.
- Cleaning procedures for goods and merchandise entering the site.
- Removal of all physical material – e.g. flyers, magazines, newspapers, etc.
- Encourage increased handwashing and introduce more handwashing facilities for workers and customers or providing hand sanitiser where this is not practical.
- Regular cleaning of vehicles that workers may take home.
- Regular cleaning of reusable delivery boxes.
- Put in place picking-up and dropping-off collection points where possible, rather than passing goods hand-to-hand.
- Set up 'no contact' return procedures where customers take return goods to a designated area.
- Provide guidance to how workers can safely assist customers with handling large item purchases.

Help everyone keep good hygiene through the working day:

- Provide additional handwashing facilities, for example, pop-ups, particularly on a large site or where there are significant numbers of personnel on site.
- Use signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency, avoid touching your face and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available.
- Provide regular reminders and signage to maintain hygiene standards.
- Provide hand sanitisers in multiple locations in addition to washrooms.
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean.
- Enhance cleaning for busy areas.
- Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets.
- Provide more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.
- Provide hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical driers.
- Ensure drivers have access to appropriate toilet facilities during their journeys and are helped to meet any requirements to allow them to do this, for example prior booking-in.

MANAGING YOUR WORKFORCE...

Change the way work is organised to create distinct groups and reduce number of contacts:

- For those workers who are required to travel and stay away from home in onsite accommodation, creating fixed groups of workers so that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same people.
- Minimise worker congregation at bottlenecks such as timeclocks, entrances and exits and maintaining social distancing during shift handovers.
- Where multiple workers are in a home, creating fixed teams of workers who carry out their duties in those teams, and minimise contact between each team.
- Identify areas where people need to hand things to each other (such as shared tools and domestic appliances) and finding ways to remove direct contact, for example, by using drop-off points or transfer zones.
- Allocate the same worker to the same household each time there is a visit.
- People who work together in one vehicle should be in a fixed pairing as soon as possible.

Avoid unnecessary work-related travel and keep workers safe when they do need to travel:

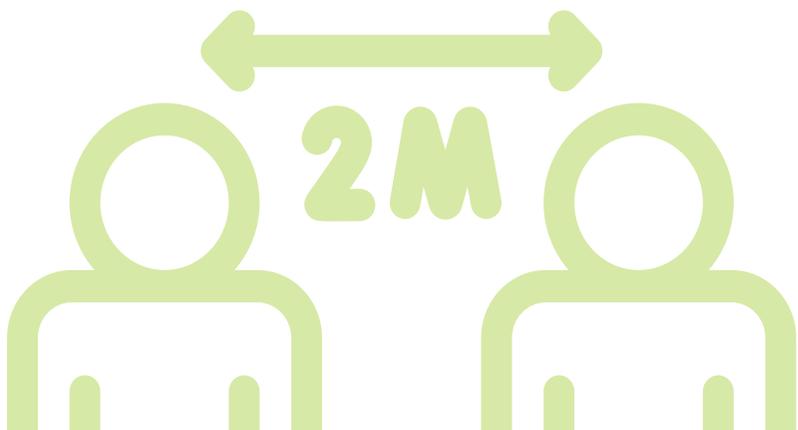
- Follow the social distancing guidelines outlined on [page 8](#).
- Minimise non-essential travel –consider remote options first.
- Minimise the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle, using fixed travel partners, increasing ventilation and avoiding sitting face-to-face.
- Cleaning shared vehicles between shifts or on handover.
- Where workers need to move between different homes and locations to complete their work, social distancing and hygiene advice should be considered, especially before entering other homes.
- Where workers are required to stay away from their residence, making sure any overnight accommodation meets social distancing guidelines.



MANAGING YOUR WORKFORCE... CONTINUED

Help workers delivering to other sites such as markets or customer premises to maintain social distancing and hygiene practices:

- Put in place procedures to minimise person-to-person contact during deliveries.
- Maintain consistent pairing where two-person deliveries are required.
- Minimise contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, by using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.



Make sure all workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures:

- Provide clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
- Engage with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes and worker representatives to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- Develop communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures for arrival at work.

Make sure all workers on site are kept up to date with how safety measures are being implemented or updated:

- Ongoing engagement with workers (including through trades unions or employee representative groups) to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.
- Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Use simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.
- Use visual communications, for example, whiteboards or signage, to explain safe working practices around the working site to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
- Communicate approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

INBOUND AND OUTBOUND GOODS...

Maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site especially in high volume situations, for example builders' yard or despatch areas:

- Revise pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.
- Minimise unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse, for example, non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.
- Minimise the contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.
- Consider methods to reduce frequency of deliveries, for example by ordering larger quantities less often.
- Where possible and safe, have single workers load or unload vehicles.
- Where possible, use the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.
- Enable drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.
- Encourage drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.



PPE AND FACE COVERINGS...

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Where you are already using PPE in your work activity (e.g. safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses, face masks) to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

The government have advised that, when managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE.

Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.

Face Coverings

The government have provided some guidance on face covering. There are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms. It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small.

A face covering can be very simple and may be worn in enclosed spaces where social distancing isn't possible. It just needs to cover your mouth and nose. It is not the same as a face mask, such as the surgical masks or respirators used by health and care workers. Similarly, face coverings are not the same as the PPE used to manage risks like dust and spray in an industrial context.

Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
- Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
- Continue to wash your hands regularly.
- Change and wash your face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it in your usual waste.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

USEFUL RESOURCES...

Please click on the titles below to navigate to the appropriate web page.

1. Stay at home guidance for households with possible Coronavirus
2. Statutory Sick Pay Guidance
3. COVID-19: what you need to do
4. COVID-19: guidance for employers and businesses
5. HSENI Risk Assessment template
6. HSE Guidance on gloves
7. HSE Guidance on mask fittings
8. Guidance on how to wear and make face coverings
9. Department of Health and Social Care guidance on masks
10. Managing risks and risk assessment at work
11. Working safely during the coronavirus outbreak
12. Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus
13. COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings



Flexible Energy Oversight Registration Body (Flexi-Orb)

Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way,

Farington, Leyland, PR25 3GR

Telephone: 0330 335 3382

Email: info@flexi-orb.com

Website: www.flexi-orb.com

Flexible Energy Oversight Registration Body (Flexi-Orb) is a trading style of Certi-fi Schemes Limited.
Registered address: Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way, Farington, Leyland,
Lancashire, England, PR25 3GR. Registered in England (Company Number 08823843).



Energy Performance Validation Scheme (EPVS)

Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way,

Farington Leyland, PR25 3GR

Telephone: 0330 0525 036

Email: info@epvs.co.uk

Website: www.epvs.co.uk

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Registered address: Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way, Farington, Leyland,
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