# Working Safely Other People's Homes – Government Advice Sheet

o In every workplace, increasing the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning.

o Businesses and workplaces should make every reasonable effort to enable working from home as a first option. Where working from home is not possible, workplaces should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (keeping people 2m apart wherever possible).

o 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.

o Further mitigating actions include:

o Increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.

o Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.

o Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other.

o Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible.

o 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).

o 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.

o In your assessment you should have particular regard to whether the people doing the work are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

The recommendations in the rest of this document are ones you should consider as you go through this process. You could also consider any advice that has been produced specifically for your sector.

If you have not already done so, you should carry out an assessment of the risks posed by COVID-19 in your workplace as soon as possible. If you are currently operating, you are likely to have gone through a lot of this thinking already. We recommend that you use this document to identify any further improvements you should make.

No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield - unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household. When working in a household where somebody is clinically vulnerable, but has not been asked to shield.

For example, the home of someone over 70, prior arrangements should be made with vulnerable people to avoid any face-to-face contact, for example, when answering the door. You should be particularly strict about handwashing, coughing and sneezing hygiene, such as covering your nose and mouth and disposing of single-use tissues. Staying updated with the latest guidance and considering how it can be applied to your work. This can include:

Washing your hands more often than usual for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, or sanitiser particularly after coughing, sneezing, and blowing your nose.

Reducing the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin immediately, then wash/clean your hands.

Cleaning regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Communicating with households prior to any visit to discuss how the work will be carried out to minimise risk for all parties.

**Maintaining social distance as far as possible.**

You must maintain social distancing in the workplace wherever possible. 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.

Social distancing applies to all parts of a business, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens and similar settings. These are often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing.

Consider travelling to sites alone using your own transport, where insurance allows.
If workers have no option but to travel together, for example, delivery teams, the following should be encouraged:
Journeys should be with the same individuals and limited in the number of people travelling per vehicle.
Maintaining good ventilation, for example, keeping windows open and passengers facing away from one another to reduce risk of transmission.
Vehicles regularly cleaned using gloves and standard cleaning products, with emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces.

Where possible, employers or agencies should match workers to households local to them to minimise transportation.
Wash hands on arrival and maintain social distancing when entering the home.

**Maintaining social distance when entering the home**

It is recognised that for providers of some in-home services, it will not always be possible to maintain physical distance from customers.
• If it isn't possible to maintain social distancing while working in the home then extra attention needs to be paid to equipment, cleaning and hygiene to reduce risk.
• Working materials, such as tools or domestic appliances, should be assigned to an individual and not shared if possible. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.

Discussing with households ahead of a visit to ask that a 2m distance is kept from those working, if possible. Asking that households leave all internal doors open to minimise contact with door handles.
Identifying busy areas across the household where people travel to, from or through, for example, stairs and corridors, and minimising movement within these areas.
Bringing your own food and drink to households and having breaks outside where possible.
Limiting the number of workers within a confined space to maintain social distancing.
Using a fixed pairing system if people have to work in close proximity. For example, during two-person assembly or maintenance.
Allocating the same workers to a household where jobs are repetitive. Employers and agencies should introduce fixed pairing to have the same individuals allocated to a household where jobs are repetitive in nature.

**Using remote working tools to avoid in-person appointments.**

Only absolutely necessary participants should attend appointments and should maintain 2m separation where possible.
Avoiding transmission during appointments, for example, from sharing pens and other objects.

Holding meetings outdoors or in well-ventilated rooms whenever possible.

In an emergency, for example, an accident, fire, or break-in, 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.

Communicating with households prior to arrival, and on arrival, to ensure the household understands the social distancing and hygiene measures that should be followed once work has commenced.

Cleaning of objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your usual cleaning products. Arranging methods of safely disposing waste with the householder.
Removing all waste and belongings from the work area at the end of a shift and at the end of a job.

Washing your hands more often than usual for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose. Reducing the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve, not your hands. Throw the tissue in a bin immediately, then wash your hands.
Cleaning regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. *If handwashing facilities are not accessible, you should carry hand sanitiser.*

Ensuring social distancing and hygiene measures are followed when supplies or tools are needed to be delivered to a home, for example, building supplies. Collecting materials in bulk to reduce the frequency of needing to visit shops to buy or collect materials. Removing waste in bulk if possible.

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks. Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.

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.
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.

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, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing. These other measures remain the best ways of managing risk in the

workplace and government would therefore not expect to see employers relying on face coverings as risk management for the purpose of their health and safety assessments. Wearing a face covering is optional and is not required by law, including in the workplace. If you choose to wear one, it is important to use face coverings properly and wash your hands before putting them on and taking them off. 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. 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 carefully in your usual waste. Practise social distancing wherever possible. You can make face-coverings at home and can find guidance on how to do this and use them safely on GOV.UK.

Where multiple workers are in a home, creating fixed teams of workers who carry out their duties in those teams, and minimising contact between each team. Identifying 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. Allocating the same worker to the same household each time there is a visit.

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.

Providing clear, consistent, and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working amongst your workers. Engaging with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.

Ongoing engagement with workers, 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).
Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines.
Communicating approaches and operational procedures to households to help their adoption before work commences.

Minimising contact during deliveries wherever possible. Where possible and safe, having single workers load or unload vehicles. Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed. Minimising the contact during delivery, for example, by calling to inform of your arrival rather than ringing the doorbell. Minimising the contact during payments and exchange of documentation, for example, using electronic payment methods and electronically signed and exchanged documents.

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