



## **Guidance Regarding Site Operations, Construction and Return to the Office Environment During COVID-19**

*This document has been prepared by SafetyOn, the health and safety organisation for the onshore wind sector in the United Kingdom, in conjunction with RenewableUK. It has been prepared for use by the wider onshore wind industry and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with updates from Government, Health & Safety Executive and other relevant stakeholders as the situation regarding COVID-19 Pandemic evolves.*

## Version reference

Version/Date	Comment
<b>V13, 19 April 2021</b>	<i>Inclusion of section on vaccination (chapter 5) Update of testing with inclusion of lateral flow testing (chapter 4)</i>
V12, 01 March 2021	<i>Update of temporary measures for training and competence (page 11 and 24)</i>
V11, 25 January 2021	<i>Inclusion of guidance regarding shielding under Chapter 5</i>
V10, 09 December 2020	<i>Compilation of information around testing including national testing studies under Chapter 4 - Testing</i>
V9, 12 October 2020	<i>Inclusion of guidance regarding physical and mental health during COVID-19</i>
V8, 21 August 2020	<i>Reference of this guidance note in Scottish government guidance Amended wording on essential work and required personnel Addition of guidance re local lockdowns and national quarantine rules, track and trace systems</i>
V7, 06 July 2020	<i>New Return to office environment Guidance O&amp;M &amp; construction guidance: text amendments for more transparency and further clarification</i>
V6, 11 June 2020	<i>Addition of risk assessment and link to COVID-19 testing via the NHS</i>
V5, 15 May 2020	<i>Inclusion of guidance for pre-construction surveys + safety note for hygiene products and PPE</i>
V4, 04 May 2020	<i>Inclusion of hierarchy of controls in O&amp;M and Construction Note</i>
V3, 17 April 2020	<i>O&amp;M guidance: further clarification on COVID19 incident reporting/ Statutory inspections New Guidance for Construction</i>
V2, 03 April 2020	<i>further clarification on transport in vehicles/ hygiene measures</i>
V1, 31 March 2020	

As an essential contributor to the United Kingdom energy infrastructure, the onshore wind industry is critical to ensuring the provision of electricity as an essential service to homes and businesses across the UK, and as a key contributor to net zero carbon targets.

With COVID-19 declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020, SafetyOn has completed a review of existing systems of work associated with the construction of onshore wind to ensure existing and future construction activity can be executed safely. These guidelines have been developed in line with the following overriding principles:

- the health, safety and wellbeing of the public and industry employees are the primary considerations in whatever we do,
- it is accepted that the onshore wind industry provides an essential service relying on a critical workforce to do so. Therefore, we have an obligation to society to try to find a way to safely continue to operate, and in addition,
- there is also a need to try to safeguard the wider economy, although this is a secondary consideration to health and safety of both the public and those employed in the industry to assist the onshore wind industry's workforce in delivering their activities safely during this unprecedented event,

To assist the onshore wind industry's workforce in delivering their activities safely during this unprecedented event, these guidelines have been developed by the industry and are supported by the Health and Safety Executives of the UK.

This guidance will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with changes in government and regulatory guidance as well as evolving practices and learning from across the industry.

A [covering note](#) has been prepared by the Scottish Government outlining guidance and advice relevant to Scotland. The note should be read in conjunction with this guidance by employers and employees operating in Scotland, or those intending to do so.

Sharing best practice will ensure safe working for the industry, and for the communities in which we operate.

Should you have feedback or comments regarding this document, or require further support, please contact SafetyOn at [safetyon@energyinst.org](mailto:safetyon@energyinst.org)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lindsay McQuade".

**Lindsay McQuade**  
**Chair**  
**SafetyOn**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hugh McNeal".

**Hugh McNeal**  
**Chief Executive**  
**RenewableUK**

## **Guidance Regarding Site Operations and Activities During COVID-19**

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## 1) Background and Overview

Further government or health guidance may supersede this note. In the event of any conflicts, please default to national health guidance issued by government including those that are devolved.

Companies should be aware of any limitations on availability of emergency response personnel that may be notified in future by the HSE, HSE Northern Ireland, or emergency services and amend emergency response plans

## 2) Risk assessment

In line with the relevant government guidance it is essential that a COVID-19 specific risk assessment is carried out by a competent person with the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with COVID-19. The risk assessment should be developed in conjunction with end users, trade unions and employee representatives, where applicable. Risk assessments should be shared with workers, and be easily accessible digitally and in hard copy.

The risk assessment should remain a live document throughout the COVID -19 pandemic. Should any changes to Government guidance, technology or recognised industry good practices occur, the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated where necessary.

Any updated risk assessments will be communicated to all relevant site personnel, highlighting the changes from previous version.

## 3) General Requirements

- All work activities need to be assessed to determine if work is truly essential. Only personnel required to deliver this work safely should travel to any site
- Travel to any site needs to be authorised by the employer
- Organisations must adhere to local guidance e.g. local lockdowns. National guidance on quarantine rules needs to be obeyed.
- All personnel should check their personal health before leaving home.
- In the event of becoming symptomatic or having a suspected case, personnel should share this information as soon as possible, with employers, site owners and other potentially affected personnel. In this event they should not travel to work and begin self-isolation.
- Employers should record self-reported current health status of their employees re: COVID-19 (i.e. any symptoms) and any relevant details from previous fourteen days
- Physical contact between colleagues should be avoided. Where this can't be achieved the hierarchy of controls applies.
- It is required to strictly limit the number of colleagues working with each other. Employers must risk assess local service team numbers in line with government guidance
- When multiple teams are on site working hours should be staggered and nominated times for tooling and specified workplaces be allocated
- All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is for the sole use of the individual. PPE shall never be shared

- Avoid exchanging personal items between colleagues such as mobile phone, laptop, pens etc.
- Organisations should have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance
- Government guidance on social distancing, disinfecting, washing hands, hand sanitiser, symptoms, notifying should be adhered to at all times and can be found [here](#) -
- Further guidance on hygiene at non-healthcare settings is provided here from the [Public Health England](#) and [Health Protection Scotland](#)
- In certain instances, cases of COVID-19 within the workplace may be reportable to the relevant regulator. More information can be found [here](#)

#### Use of PPE and Hygiene products

All protective and hygiene equipment made available to personnel should be fit for purpose and supplied with instructions and training where appropriate and only used as per the manufacturers' recommendations.

## 4) Testing

- Employers should ensure an effective track and trace system is in place for all sites
- Symptomatic personnel can receive COVID-19 testing via the [NHS](#)
- Lateral Flow Testing: The use of Lateral Flow Testing provides an opportunity to identify positive cases of COVID-19 that may be asymptomatic. Should an organisation decide to carry out lateral flow testing at the workplace, risk assessments should be updated, and site emergency plans should include steps to take should an asymptomatic case be identified.
  - Using LFT must be viewed as an additional measure to the existing site/ workplace arrangements and not replace them.
  - Where possible LFT test kits should be sent to staff's home address or equivalent to allow self-testing away from the workplace.
  - Positive LFT should be confirmed with a PCR test as soon as possible.

## 5) Vaccination

SafetyOn strongly recommend organisations encourage and support all staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

It should be recognised that those who receive a COVID-19 vaccination may have short term side effects, e.g. painful arm, headache, nausea. As a result, there may be a temporary reduction in capability to carry out certain tasks, e.g. climbing, manual handling, use of power tools. Companies should consider these side effects and discuss with their staff when putting them to work.

## 6) Shielding

Following the emergence of the VOC 202012/01 strain of COVID 19, employers should identify any personnel, or personnel with direct family members, that are categorised as shielding and ensure effective arrangements are in place to manage this risk.

## 7) Site Operations and Activities

Prior to commencing works onsite and mobilisation of workers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate mitigation and controls are put in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 to both those working on site, and the communities in which onshore wind construction projects are located.

Should an activity not be possible to be carried out in line with social distancing requirements, employers must defer to a hierarchy of control measures to manage the risks associated with the task, this includes:

- **Eliminating** the risk completely by looking for other ways to complete the task.
- **Reducing** the risk by changing the means used to carry it out.
- **Isolate** personnel from the risk (for example by erection of a screen or barrier) and/or introduce strictly enforced controls.

The use of appropriate PPE is in addition to the above points.

### Transport

- Where possible:
  - personnel should travel to site independently of one another
  - the same personnel should work in the same teams every day and use the same vehicles
  - persons should not share vehicles, where suitable distancing cannot be achieved
- In the exceptions this cannot be achieved, and senior management review concludes that sharing a vehicle is necessary, other appropriate measures should be taken in accordance with the risk assessment undertaken and users must follow strict hygiene protocol from official sources
- Regularly disinfect all surfaces that could be touched by personnel

### Service Centre, Equipment Stores or similar

- Where possible service teams must avoid visiting the service centre, equipment stores or similar
- If critical for the collection of tools / materials, the time spent in the service centre, equipment stores or similar should be minimised and / or staggered
- Organisations should consider scheduling visiting times or collections
- Personnel should observe social distancing guidelines wherever possible when working in the service centre, equipment stores or similar
- Where possible carry out any preparation works outside rather than inside the service centre, equipment stores or similar to avoid spending too much time in an enclosed and shared environment
- Tools which are shared by teams should be handled with clean gloves to avoid risk of spreading contamination and should be disinfected after use



## Turbine and Substation

- Hand hygiene procedures should follow NHS guidance and be used at entry and exit points
- The first person to arrive at the turbine / sub-station should disinfect all door handles, light switches, handrails on stairs and the last person should repeat this process when exiting
- While in the turbine maintain a 2-metre minimum separation by working in different areas; Where this cannot be achieved other appropriate measures should be taken in accordance with risk assessments and follow strict hygiene protocol at the end of the working period from official sources
- Wear [suitable gloves](#) at all times while working and regularly dispose of / clean them in line with risk assessments
- Site Management should log all turbines being worked on and who has worked on them, should a technician become symptomatic consider restricting access to the turbines that the technician has been in up to 72hrs

## Service Lift / Ladders

- Technicians should not travel in the service lift together and must ensure they maintain sufficient social distancing at all times, while ensuring a suitable and sufficient means of communication
- Where service lifts are not present, gloves are to be worn when using ladders. Ladders are to be ascended as per training, i.e. one technician per ladder, and closing hatches when through them
- After use of the lift, all contact points within the service lift should be sprayed and / or wiped down with disinfectant, prior to use by a different technician
- Once use of service lift / ladders is complete technicians should use hand sanitiser to clean hands. Hand washing must take place as soon as reasonably possible afterwards

## Emergency Response

- The rescue of any personnel on site is considered an emergency situation
- Social distancing guidelines cannot be respected during such activities in order to ensure life is preserved (e.g. first aid kits should be supplemented to include additional protective measures, such as face masks, gloves, etc.)

## Office/Desk Based Activities, Paperwork and Computer Related Tasks

- All works not on the turbine or in the substation such as completion of reports, answering emails etc. should be completed at home

## 8) Workforce Competence

COVID-19 requires to be managed in addition to, and not in place of, requirements for training and competence for those attending an onshore wind site. COVID-19 will require certain enhancements to be made to ensure the risk is understood, mitigations are explained and adhered to and workers are competent to be on site. The following guidance is intended to ensure a consistent baseline across the industry.

### Training and competence

- Where adequate social distancing can be implemented, competence training courses should continue
- Organisations should assess whether training can be delivered online
- Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of competency certification
- Organisations should check with training providers on temporary measures, e.g. GWO has agreed to allow that:
  - Course participants who have had to cancel their refresher training within the 24 months validity period due to COVID-19 can extend expired training up to a maximum of 60 days from expiry.
  - **Note: This flexibility ends 30/06/21. Please reference GWO Advisory Note on Corona virus for full details**
  - In such cases, the course participant shall document in writing the reasons for cancellation and inform the training provider ahead of attending the next available refresher course.
- Skills fade can mean trained skill efficiency is reduced as they are not used during normal work (such as First Aid) or can mean gradual deviation from the correct and safe skills practices acquired during training, therefore companies should assess personnel competencies in relation to training certificate extensions. The HSE's position on First Aid training can be found [here](#).

### Medicals and Fitness to Work

- Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of medicals and fitness to work assessments

### Issues and Concerns

- Personnel should be reminded of each organisation's internal mechanisms to raise health and safety issues and concerns. These procedures should be posted on site / shared with staff along with all the relevant risk assessments
- Additional resources are provided on the HSE website [here](#).

## 9) Statutory inspections

It is expected that some statutory inspections will still be available during the COVID-19 crisis. Where this is not possible a risk-based approach can be used to assess site equipment that may fall out of its inspection regime. The following three tier system maybe considered:

- **Tier One: Low Risk** – Where previous reports had shown minimal wear not near to its tolerance limits, with low usage then the period between could be extended.
- **Tier Two: Medium Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown some wear, but still above its tolerance limits with medium use then additional mitigation measures put in place prior to extending the interval between inspections. The additional mitigation measures could include visual inspection of components by a trained technician.
- **Tier Three: High Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown wear approaching the tolerance limits and additional usage then an alternative means of access would be required. If this to result in additional climbing, then the additional health and safety risks would need to be managed including limiting and monitoring individual climb distances.

This approach would be consistent with the requirements of LOLER/ PSS. More information on the HSE website [here](#).

Organisation should have a programme in place to ensure any statutory inspections missed due to COVID-19 are rescheduled appropriately.

## 10) Welfare and Arrangements

Workers will require to adhere to strict health and safety guidance while on site to ensure their own, their colleagues and wider community protection from COVID-19. Measures such as those noted below should be deployed and adhered to by all workers onsite.

### Lunch & breaks

- Break periods should be staggered between individual teams
- During lunch breaks personnel should maintain physical/ social distancing rules
- Canteen surfaces should be clear of all items so surfaces can be easily cleaned
- Personnel should bring their own lunch / drinks to site
- Personnel should clean up and disinfect area before and after use
- Wash all utensils in dishwasher or warm soapy water
- Personnel should wash hands following NHS guidance before and after lunch and breaks. If water is not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Where sanitiser is used hands should be washed using NHS guidance as soon as possible afterwards

### Mental Wellbeing

- Stay informed through official sources and set limits for news and social media
- Keep up healthy routines such as exercise and diet
- Stay connected to others
- Try to anticipate distress and support each other

- Don't make assumptions which may stigmatise an individual's health

More information and advice on mental wellbeing can be found [here](#)

## **11) Communication with Communities and Local Stakeholders**

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all personnel and ensure that our activities do not compromise in any way the health of the communities we work close to and within. It is essential that we are recognised as a “good and trusted neighbour”.

To this end, while the guidance cannot be prescriptive, all organisations should ensure effective communication and engagement with communities and local key stakeholders. This important aspect of our work should be considered at the planning stage and throughout the lifecycle of the project. The initiatives should be proportionate to the project scale, local geography and demographics. It is the responsibility of each organisation to determine what is the most effective fit and could include community liaison, use of social media, letter drops and engagement with community leaders.

In simple terms, our communities need to be “front of mind” in all that we do.

## **Guidance Regarding Construction During COVID-19**

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## 1) Background and Overview

Purpose of this guidance is to inform a safe system of work required to deliver construction activities in line with COVID-19 government guidance

Further government or health guidance may supersede this note. In the event of any conflicts, please default to national health guidance issued by government including those that are devolved. Companies should be aware of any limitations on availability of emergency response personnel that may be notified in future by the HSE, HSE Northern Ireland, or emergency services and amend emergency response plans accordingly.

## 2) Risk assessment

In line with the relevant government it is essential that a COVID-19 specific risk assessment is carried out by a competent person with the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with COVID-19. The risk assessment should be developed in conjunction with end users, trade unions and employee representatives, where applicable. Risk assessments should be shared with workers, and be easily accessible digitally and in hard copy.

The risk assessment should remain a live document throughout the COVID -19 pandemic. Should any changes to Government guidance, technology or recognised industry good practices occur, the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with those stakeholders identified above, where necessary.

Any updated risk assessments will be communicated to all relevant site personnel, highlighting the changes from previous versions.

## 3) General Requirements

- All work activities need to be assessed to determine if work is truly essential. Only personnel required to deliver construction activities safely should travel to any site
- Organisations must adhere to local guidance e.g. local lockdowns. National guidance on quarantine rules needs to be obeyed.
- Construction sites operating during the COVID-19 pandemic should protect the workforce – conforming with social distancing and hygiene requirements, or other appropriate mitigation
- In travelling to and from an onshore wind construction site, workers should have regard to social distancing and necessary hygiene measures
- Where workers require alternative accommodation due to the remoteness of the construction site versus their home, suitable arrangements should be made to comply with social distancing and hygiene measures.
- Teams or groups of workers may seek to secure suitable accommodation that would allow for co-habitation of workers from a particular construction site, with the same group able to commute to and from site.
- At an onshore wind construction site, all communal areas will have restricted access and adhere to strict social distancing requirements of 2 metres separation at all times.
- All personnel should check their personal health before leaving home.

- In the event of becoming symptomatic or having a suspected case, personnel should share this information as soon as possible, with employers, site owners and other potentially affected personnel. In this event they should not travel to work and begin self-isolation.
- Employers should record self-reported current health status of their employees re: COVID-19 (i.e. any symptoms) and any relevant details from previous fourteen days
- In certain instances, cases of COVID-19 within the workplace may be reportable to the relevant regulator. Further information can be found [here](#)

Use of PPE and Hygiene products:

All protective and hygiene equipment made available to personnel should be supplied with appropriate instructions and only used as per the manufacturers' recommendations.

#### 4) Testing

- Employers should ensure an effective track and trace system is in place for all sites
- Symptomatic personnel can receive COVID-19 testing via the [NHS](#)
- Lateral Flow Testing: The use of Lateral Flow Testing provides an opportunity to identify positive cases of COVID-19 that may be asymptomatic. Should an organisation decide to carry out lateral flow testing at the workplace, risk assessments should be updated, and site emergency plans should include steps to take should an asymptomatic case be identified.
  - Using LFT must be viewed as an additional measure to the existing site/ workplace arrangements and not replace them.
  - Where possible LFT test kits should be sent to staff's home address or equivalent to allow self-testing away from the workplace.
  - Positive LFT should be confirmed with a PCR test as soon as possible.

#### 5) Vaccination

SafetyOn strongly recommend organisations encourage and support all staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

It should be recognised that those who receive a COVID-19 vaccination may have short term side effects, e.g. painful arm, headache, nausea. As a result, there may be a temporary reduction in capability to carry out certain tasks, e.g. climbing, manual handling, use of power tools. Companies should consider these side effects and discuss with their staff when putting them to work.

#### 6) Shielding

Following the emergence of the VOC 202012/01 strain of COVID 19, employers should identify any personnel, or personnel with direct family members, that are categorised as shielding and ensure effective arrangements are in place to manage this risk.



## 7) Onsite Construction

Prior to commencing works onsite and mobilisation of workers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate mitigation and controls are put in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 to both those working on site, and the communities in which construction projects are located.

This section of the guidance seeks to provide the industry with baseline advice that should be adhered to prior to works commencing.

### Pre-Construction

This guidance is intended to cover development and investigation activities, including surveys/supervision that have a limited annual window of opportunity. Ecologists and environmental professionals should continue with outdoor work, where they can continue to follow social distancing measures, hold updated risk assessments and having secured land-owner permission.

### Work Planning

Should an activity not be possible to be carried out in line with social distancing requirements, employers must defer to a hierarchy of control measures to manage the risks associated with the task, this includes:

- **Eliminating** the risk completely by looking for other ways to complete the task.
- **Reducing** the risk by changing the means used to carry it out.
- **Isolate** personnel from the risk (for example by erection of a screen or barrier) and/or introduce strictly enforced controls.

The above points are in addition to the use of appropriate PPE.

Before heading to site or resuming works, additional planning will be required to manage the risks associated with COVID-19 and should consider:

- For remote locations worker accommodation may be required, can this be safely achieved in line with social distancing and hygiene requirements?
- Can workers get to the workplace safely is suitable transport available allowing for social distancing where possible?
- Is the site welfare set up to allow staff to take suitable breaks safely allowing for social distancing?
- Have all common points of potential physical contact been identified, and has suitable control measures been implemented?
- Has the workforce been made aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and the measures in place to protect them?
- Has the first aid need assessment for site activities been reviewed to ensure additional measures are in place and potential limitation with emergency response capacity has been accounted for?

- Duty holders must review all work activities and amend the associated safe systems of work to account for COVID-19 risks, considering the following:
- Eliminate the risk: is this task necessary at this time, or can it be postponed to a later date?
- Is the level of staff involved in undertaking the work kept to a minimum? Can the task be carried out in line with the 2-metre rule?
- If not, is there suitable and sufficient arrangements in place to mitigate COVID-19 risk i.e. personal hygiene measures/ sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) in place at the work location?
- Has adequate time been allocated for undertaking the work while following amended arrangements?
- Is there suitable and sufficient level of PPE available and in place at the work location?
- Organisations should have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance.

### Transport and Mobility of Labour

- Where possible:
  - personnel should travel to site independently of one another
  - the same personnel should work in the same teams every day and use the same vehicles
  - persons should not share vehicles, where suitable distancing cannot be achieved
- In the exceptions this cannot be achieved, and senior management review concludes that sharing a vehicle is necessary, consider any other appropriate measures and follow strict hygiene protocol from official sources
- Regularly disinfect all surfaces that could be touched by personnel

### Site Works

- Only personnel required to deliver windfarm construction activities should attend site
- Planned plant servicing, where possible, shall be completed prior to plant arriving on site
- Any contractors should consider their safe system of work in line with this document, and current COVID-19, government guidance, and update accordingly
- Travel to an onshore wind construction site requires to be authorised by the employer
- Emergency arrangements should consider suitable contingencies for isolation and returning a suspected COVID-19 case to home from site
- Where possible, physical interactions between different colleagues should be avoided.
- It is required to strictly limit the number of colleagues working with each other. Employers should risk assess local service team numbers in line with government guidance
- Small teams may be grouped and work together consistently. However, if necessary, an interaction beyond that group is required it should be conducted in line with social distancing requirement and/or such hygiene measures as to mitigate risk of infection. This may include a maximum time period if working indoors or a confined space.

- When multiple teams are on site working hours should be staggered and nominated times for tooling and specified workplaces be allocated
- All PPE is for the sole use of the individual. PPE shall never be shared or transferred between workers.
- Avoid exchanging personal items between colleagues such as mobile phone, laptop, pens etc.
- Government guidance on social distancing, disinfecting, washing hands, hand sanitiser, symptoms, notifying should be adhered to at all times and can be found [here](#)
- Further guidance on hygiene at non-healthcare settings is provided here from the [Public Health England](#) and [Health Protection Scotland](#)

### Equipment Stores or Similar

- Where possible teams must avoid visiting equipment stores or similar
- If critical for the collection of tools / materials, the time spent in equipment stores or similar should be minimised and / or staggered
- Organisations should consider scheduling visiting times or collections
- Personnel should observe social distancing guidelines wherever possible when working in equipment stores or similar
- Where possible carry out any preparation works outside rather than inside equipment stores or similar to avoid spending too much time in an enclosed and shared environment
- Tools which are shared by teams should be handled with clean gloves to avoid risk of spreading contamination and should be disinfected after use

### Emergency Response

- The rescue of any personnel on site is considered an emergency situation
- Social distancing guidelines cannot be respected during such activities in order to ensure life is preserved (e.g. first aid kits should be supplemented to include additional protective measures, such as face masks, gloves, etc.)

## 8) Welfare and Arrangements

Workers will require to adhere to strict health and safety guidance while on site to ensure their own, their colleagues and wider community protection from COVID-19. Measures such as those noted below should be deployed and adhered to by all workers onsite.

### Canteen and Break Facilities

Existing welfare arrangements can continue to be used with social distancing guidelines to be applied and consideration should be given to an enhanced cleaning regime.

Where possible, all employees should bring sufficient pre-prepared food and drink for their own personal consumption with them from home each day. Any waste from this must be taken home by employees.

Dedicated eating areas should be identified on site to reduce food waste and contamination, employees will be allowed to eat (solo) in their cars or work vehicles, or within a designated canteen facility. This shall be agreed on a case by case basis with the site manager.

- Break periods should be staggered between individual teams
- During lunch breaks personnel should maintain physical/ social distancing rules
- Canteen surfaces should be clear of all items, so surfaces can be easily cleaned
- Personnel should bring their own lunch / drinks to site
- Personnel should clean up and disinfect area before and after use
- Wash all utensils in dishwasher or warm soapy water
- Workers should wash hands following NHS guidance before and after lunch and breaks. If water is not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Where sanitiser is used hands should be washed in accordance with NHS guidance as soon as possible afterwards

### Changing Facilities and Drying Rooms

- Staggered start and finish times will be adopted to strictly maintain social distancing
- Enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day will be put in place
- Only one employee will be allowed to use any changing or drying facility at any time to maintain the requirement for social distancing

### Toilet and Sanitary Facilities

- Social distancing should be practised within toilet facilities
- Employees must wash/sanitise hands before and after using the facilities
- Site management should ensure toilets are being regularly cleaned and in addition, employees must use sanitising wipes to clean common points of contact 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

- Employees must use rubbish bins for hand towels

### Enhanced Cleaning

- Enhanced cleaning procedures should be considered particularly in communal areas and at common points of contact, e.g.:
  - Taps and washing facilities
  - Toilet flush and seats
  - Door handles and push plates
  - Handrails on staircases and corridors
  - Food preparation and eating surfaces
  - Telephone equipment
  - Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment

Consideration should be given to additional measures for waste management should be put in place.

### Mental Wellbeing

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health so all organisations should consider available tools and information available online or in your own business.

- Stay informed through official sources and set limits for news and social media
- Keep up healthy routines such as exercise and diet
- Stay connected to others
- Try to anticipate distress and support each other
- Don't make assumptions which may stigmatise an individual's health

More information and advice on mental wellbeing can be found [here](#)

## 9) Workforce Competence

COVID-19 requires to be managed in addition to, and not in place of, requirements for effective communication, training and competence for those attending an onshore wind construction site. COVID-19 will require certain enhancements to be made to ensure the risk is understood, mitigations are explained and adhered to and workers are competent to be on site. The following guidance is intended to ensure a consistent baseline across the industry.

### Safety Inductions and Daily Briefings

- For new employees requiring site inductions, these should be carried out offsite where possible, where this cannot happen social distancing rules should apply
- Daily briefings / toolbox talks should take place to remind workers of specific COVID-19 protocols utilising available video messaging technologies
- Where this is not possible, they should be conducted in the open air with all employees maintaining social distancing. Site managers will mark out suitable areas where necessary
- Alternate methods of confirmation that site induction has been read and understood should be considered
- Please keep in contact with your workforce on site and keep up to date with company advice. Immediate stop any work if you have concerns and speak to management.

### Issues and Concerns

- Personnel should be reminded of each organisation's internal mechanisms to raise health and safety issues and concerns.
- Additional resources are provided on the HSE website [here](#).

### External Workforce and Consultants On site

Suitable arrangements should be in place to account for the external workforce supporting site considerations should be given to:

- Separation between delivery drivers and the rest of site
- Establishing designated offloading zones where possible
- Delivery drivers remaining in their vehicles if the load will allow it and washing or cleaning their hands before unloading goods and materials
- Where possible, specific toilets being allocated to external site visitors, and ensuring enhanced cleaning of these areas takes place
- Consultants engaged on site can remain in contact via mobile phone if possible or by maintaining strict adherence to the 2-metre exclusion zone if no signal is available and all reports to be issued electronically

### Medicals and Fitness to Work

- Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of medicals and fitness to work assessments

## Training and Competence

- Competence training courses should be excluded unless adequate physical distancing or non-physical options can be implemented
- Organisations should assess whether training can be delivered online
- Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of competency certification
- Organisations should check with relevant training providers and check with their accrediting body for any temporary measures in place,
- Skills fade can mean trained skill efficiency is reduced as they are not used during normal work (such as First Aid) or can mean gradual deviation from the correct and safe skills practices acquired during training, therefore companies should assess personnel competencies in relation to training certificate extensions. The HSEs position on First Aid training can be found [here](#).

## 10) Communication with Communities and Local Stakeholders

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all personnel and ensure that our activities do not compromise in any way the health of the communities we work close to and within. It is essential that we are recognised as a “good and trusted neighbour”.

To this end, while the guidance cannot be prescriptive, all organisations should ensure effective communication and engagement with communities and local key stakeholders. This important aspect of our work should be considered at the planning stage and throughout the lifecycle of the project. The initiatives should be proportionate to the project scale, local geography and demographics. It is the responsibility of each organisation to determine what is the most effective fit and could include community liaison, use of social media, letter drops and engagement with community leaders.

In simple terms, our communities need to be “front of mind” in all that we do.

## 11) Statutory Inspections

It is expected that some statutory inspections will still be available during the COVID-19 crisis. Where this is not possible a risk-based approach can be used to assess site equipment that may fall out of its inspection regime. The following three tier system may be considered:

- **Tier One: Low Risk** – Where previous reports had shown minimal wear not near to its tolerance limits, with low usage then the period between could be extended;
- **Tier Two: Medium Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown some wear, but still above its tolerance limits with medium use then additional mitigation measures put in place prior to extending the interval between inspections. The additional mitigation measures could include visual inspection of components by a trained technician.
- **Tier Three: High Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown wear approaching the tolerance limits and additional usage then an alternative means of access would be required. If this to result in additional climbing, then the additional health and safety risks would need to be managed including limiting and monitoring individual climb distances.

This approach would be consistent with the requirements of LOLER/ PSS. More information on the HSE website [here](#).

Organisation should have a programme in place to ensure any statutory inspections missed due to COVID-19 are rescheduled appropriately.



## **Guidance Regarding Return to Office Environment During COVID-19**

*This document has been prepared by SafetyOn, the health and safety organisation for the onshore wind sector in the United Kingdom, in conjunction with RenewableUK. It has been prepared for use by the wider onshore wind industry and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with updates from Government, Health & Safety Executive and other relevant stakeholders as the situation regarding COVID-19 Pandemic evolves.*

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## 1) Background and Overview

The purpose of this guidance is to assist an organisation when planning to return to the office environment to ensure a safe system of work required in line with COVID-19 government guidance.

Further government or health guidance may supersede this note. In the event of any conflicts, please default to national health guidance issued by government including those that are devolved. Companies should be aware of any limitations on availability of emergency response personnel that may be notified in future by the HSE, HSE Northern Ireland, or emergency services and amend emergency response plans

## 2) Risk assessment

In line with the relevant government guidance it is essential that a COVID-19 specific risk assessment is carried out by a competent person with the appropriate knowledge and understanding of the risks associated with COVID-19. The risk assessment should be developed in conjunction with end users, trade unions and employee representatives, where applicable. Risk assessments should be shared with workers, and be easily accessible digitally and in hard copy.

The risk assessment should remain a live document throughout the COVID -19 pandemic. Should any changes to Government guidance, technology or recognised industry good practices occur, the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated in conjunction with those stakeholders identified above, where necessary.

Any updated risk assessments will be communicated to all relevant site personnel, highlighting the changes from previous version.

## 3) General Requirements

- Organisations must adhere to local guidance e.g. local lockdowns. National guidance on quarantine rules needs to be obeyed.
- All personnel attending the office should check their personal health before leaving for work, cognisant of the symptoms of COVID-19. In the event of exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID 19 they should notify their employer, should not travel to work, and begin a period of self-isolation
- In the event of becoming symptomatic or having a suspected case, personnel should share this information as soon as possible, with their line manager and other potentially affected colleagues. In this event they should not travel to work and begin self-isolation.
- Employers should record self-reported current health status of their employees re: COVID-19 (i.e. any symptoms) and any relevant details from previous fourteen days
- In certain instances, cases of COVID-19 within the workplace may be reportable to the relevant regulator. More information can be found [here](#)

Use of PPE and Hygiene / sanitation products

All protective and hygiene equipment made available to personnel should be fit for purpose and supplied with instructions and training where appropriate and only used as per the manufacturers' recommendations.

#### 4) Testing

- Employers should ensure an effective track and trace system is in place for all sites
- Symptomatic personnel can receive COVID-19 testing via the [NHS](#)
- Lateral Flow Testing: The use of Lateral Flow Testing provides an opportunity to identify positive cases of COVID-19 that may be asymptomatic. Should an organisation decide to carry out lateral flow testing at the workplace, risk assessments should be updated, and site emergency plans should include steps to take should an asymptomatic case be identified.
  - Using LFT must be viewed as an additional measure to the existing site/ workplace arrangements and not replace them.
  - Where possible LFT test kits should be sent to staff's home address or equivalent to allow self-testing away from the workplace.
  - Positive LFT should be confirmed with a PCR test as soon as possible.

#### 5) Vaccination

SafetyOn strongly recommend organisations encourage and support all staff to be vaccinated for COVID-19.

It should be recognised that those who receive a COVID-19 vaccination may have short term side effects, e.g. painful arm, headache, nausea. As a result, there may be a temporary reduction in capability to carry out certain tasks, e.g. climbing, manual handling, use of power tools. Companies should consider these side effects and discuss with their staff when putting them to work.

#### 6) Shielding

Following the emergence of the VOC 202012/01 strain of COVID 19, employers should identify any personnel, or personnel with direct family members, that are categorised as shielding and ensure effective arrangements are in place to manage this risk.

#### 7) Return to the office planning

Prior to opening offices and mobilisation of workers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate mitigation and controls are put in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 to those working in the office or visiting

This section of the guidance seeks to provide the industry with baseline advice that should be adhered to prior to works commencing. Any specific arrangements need to be communicated via a COVID specific induction.

##### Staffing

- Organisations should consider the benefits and risks of returning staff to the workplace against the risks of prolonged periods of working remotely (incl. working from home policies <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>).
- An assessment of proposed staffing levels should be carried out by management and include the following considerations:

- Can offices / premises adhere to social distancing guidance
- Is there adequate provision of suitable sanitation and hygiene measures and where required PPE
- Is there adequate staffing for emergency response (i.e. first aiders and fire marshals)

### Fitness to work

- Every employee who is unable to attend work, should contact their line manager. If the employee feels well enough to do so, and the role allows it, work from home is advised. If work from home is not an option (or the person is not well enough for work), Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) should be considered.
- In the event of becoming symptomatic during the working day, personnel should return home and follow appropriate government advice. Personnel should liaise with line manager regarding ability to continue working.

### Travel to/from work

- Where possible, public transport and car shares or taxis should be avoided. Flexibility about working hours should be considered by line manager if this results in a longer commute.
- Staff members should be encouraged to stagger start and finish times to avoid travelling during peak times and should speak to their line managers to discuss suitable timings.
- If use of public transport can't be avoided, wearing of PPE is required and social distancing where possible should be considered.
- Social distancing and hygiene measures should be followed at all times.

### Working Hours

- Businesses may look to relocate staff to 'out of town' locations to avoid public transport.
- Amending start and finish times may reduce risks of exposure as footfall on public transport reduces outside of peak hours.
- Shift and rotating workforces:
  - Consider virtual changeovers, or physically separate teams using different rooms, barriers and telephones to avoid unnecessary contact between different shifts.
  - Consider process safety implications and risks from cold starts / restarting processes and ensure previous protocols are still valid.
  - Allow enough time for revised cleaning and sanitisation levels between shifts.

## **8) Social distancing and hygiene protocols**

Social distancing and hygiene guidelines should be followed in line with UK and/or devolved Government Advice.

- Avoid sharing work equipment between colleagues such as mobile phone, laptop, pens etc.

- Government guidance on social distancing, disinfecting, washing hands, hand sanitiser, symptoms, notifying should be adhered to at all times and can be found [here](#)
- Further guidance on hygiene at non-healthcare settings is provided here from the [Public Health England](#) and [Health Protection Scotland](#)

The following should be avoided:

- physical greetings (e.g. handshakes)
- in-person meetings (personal or business-related)
- face-to-face work and sitting at a desk adjacent to colleagues
- passing colleagues while moving around the office whenever possible.

## 9) Revised building and room capacities:

### Desk / workstation set-up:

- Where required, install screens to protect staff in receptions or other high-risk areas.
- Desk sharing/clear desk:
  - Avoid hot desking where possible, where this is not possible enhanced cleaning measures should be in place.
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitisation:
  - Suitable sanitising equipment should be in place to enable cleaning where required e.g. workstations
  - Workspace should be sanitised after each shift to reduce exposure.
  - Expectations should be communicated to cleaning contractors.
- Where possible, consider providing designated routes, direction of travel (marked out by lines on the floor etc.) to avoid individuals/ teams accidentally coming into contact with each other, particularly in areas with limited space.

### Meeting rooms:

External meetings should be avoided. Alternatives such as phone or web conferences should be used whenever possible. If face-to-face meetings are necessary, ensure that you comply with the social distancing rules.

- Maintaining social distancing:
  - Desk space should be redesigned to maintain social distancing.
  - 'Dos and don'ts' should be passed on to meeting attendees prior to meetings commencing.
  - Expectations should be communicated to third-party attendees in advance of the meeting.
- Sanitisation supplies:
  - Ensure locations are stocked with suitable sanitisation products for users.

### Inter-floor accessibility:

- Avoid elevator use whenever possible:
  - If elevators must be used (disability, tall buildings, carrying goods, etc.), ensuring social distancing is maintained (single occupancy).
  - Ensure elevator touch controls are sanitised after use.
  - Provision of sanitiser for elevator users.
- Where possible, make stairways single direction taking into consideration emergency access/ egress.
- Consideration should be given to potential impacts on existing fire escape routes if parts of the building are closed down or access an egress routes are modified.

## **10) Visitor guidance, procedures and signage**

- Ensure visitors are engaged with and are aware of site enhancements, where possible the office COVID arrangements should be sent to the visitor prior to arrival to the premises
- Communicate expectations in advance of visitors arriving on site.
- Ensure visitor levels remain within any revised occupancy levels and social distancing can be maintained.

## **11) Welfare and Arrangements**

Users will require to adhere to strict health and safety guidance while in the office to ensure their own and their colleagues and visitors protection from COVID-19. Measures such as those noted below should be deployed and adhered to by all in the office.

### Canteen

- Canteen facilities should be risk assessed to ensure they can operate whilst adhering to distancing and hygiene guidelines, considerations should include:
  - Review kitchen/ catering capacity and ability for social distancing
  - Implement a staggered access system to prevent high numbers of staff using the canteen.
  - Ensure canteen surfaces remain clear of all items so surfaces can be easily cleaned
  - While welfare provision must be made available to staff, requests for staff to supply their own lunch / drinks and cutlery should be considered.
  - Office rules should include an expectation that canteen users should clean up and disinfect area before and after use
  - Consider closing canteens or establish dining protocols
  - Provision of out of hours cleaning by a suitably qualified contractor

### Toilets

- Facilities should be risk assessed to ensure they can operate whilst adhering to distancing and hygiene guidelines, considerations should include:

- Providing suitable sanitising measures to allow common points of contact (door handles, taps) to be cleaned by the user
- Providing adequate hygiene measures to facilitate hand washing
- Provision of out of hours cleaning by a suitably qualified contractor

### **Mental Wellbeing**

- Stay informed through official sources and set limits for news and social media
- Keep up healthy routines such as exercise and diet
- Stay connected to others
- Try to anticipate distress and support each other
- Don't make assumptions which may stigmatise an individual's health

More information and advice on mental wellbeing can be found [here](#)

## **12) Communication with Office users**

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all personnel and ensure that our activities do not compromise in any way the health of everybody we work close to. at any of our facilities. It is essential that we are recognised as a “good and trusted employer”.

To this end, while the guidance cannot be prescriptive, all organisations should ensure effective communication and engagement with key stakeholders.



## **Guidance Regarding Physical and Mental Health During COVID-19**

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It is important that we all focus on maintaining workforce mental health and wellbeing throughout COVID. To help with this a range of resources and an employee support framework that is proportionate to their workforces and indeed the nature of the work being carried out should be made available where possible.

Any taken approach should be geared towards enhancing positive wellbeing in addition to preventing negative impact.

Organisations should continually assess the health of their workforce and assist those that may be having difficulty adapting to a different work environment.

Consideration should be given to both, working on sites and working from home with a particular focus on:

- Those with pre-existing mental health issues
- Those that living alone or in isolated locations
- Those with caring responsibilities issues that may prevent them working standard hours
- Those with limited workspace space at home

Giving staff the ability to share their views and concerns on COVID is essential to understanding the challenges they may be facing; this may be achieved through:

- Having informal meetings with staff
- Regular one to one meetings between management and staff
- Issuing questionnaires to the workforce to allow their views to be captured
- Internal reporting mechanisms, both open and confidential to allow issues and concerns to raised when they occur

Ensuring regular communication with the workforce is also important as well as providing confidence that COVID is being managed within the organisation:

- Explain to staff what arrangements are in place and why
- Ensure any significant updates from government regarding COVID-19 is communicated to the workforce promptly and include how they will affect them.
- For organisations that provide access to support services, make sure all staff are aware of how to access them

Other considerations for assisting staff include:

- Encourage regular breaks during the day
- Promote physical exercise
- Promote a healthy work-life balance

Further information sources on mental health, wellbeing and COVID are available, these include:

- <https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus-mental-health>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>

### Appendix – Covid-19 Windfarm Critical Workers Work Details Summary Sheet

The following information provides relevant details for the travel of the Critical Worker. This covers between their home or maintenance base and the renewable energy projects in order to maintain and guarantee the supply of electricity to the nation.

Name	
Employer	
Maintenance Base (if relevant)	
Windfarm name / location	
Windfarm Owner	
Owners contractor(s) (if relevant) Owner may contract services through other parties	
Reason for travel/work	