



**INLAND
WATERWAYS**
ASSOCIATION



Guidance Note:

RESTORATION & BRANCH WORK PARTIES DURING CORONAVIRUS

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INTRODUCTION

On March 23rd 2020 the Government imposed lockdown restrictions due to the outbreak of the pandemic Coronavirus (Covid-19). Since then the Government has changed the restrictions and regulations to allow work and other activities to resume in a controlled manner.

The introduction of vaccines to control Covid-19 is allowing a stepped return to everyday living with relaxation of rules on social contact. Rules on social distancing, cleaning, ventilation and hand sanitisation remain and face coverings must be worn in indoor settings.

The Inland Waterway Association cancelled, postponed or altered the delivery of events and activities, including Waterway Recovery Group activities.

Canal and River Trust (CRT) cancelled events and volunteer work parties during lockdown. In order to restart volunteer activities CRT has published risk assessment principles for a return to work and volunteer activities. A link to the principles is given on p.9.

This guidance has been prepared using government guidelines related to the construction industry and outdoor business as well as information from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) regarding a return to work.

When planning your event or work party you should consider who might attend and whether they have had the two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine. You may want to limit attendees to only those who have had the vaccine.

From 9th April 2021 free lateral flow test kits are available. You should consider whether attendees at you work party take a test to ensure they present negative for symptoms of Covid-19.

RESTARTING BUSINESSES

The government has set out five steps for restarting businesses:

- 1** **Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment**
Before restarting work you should ensure the safety of the workplace by:
 - Carrying out a risk assessment in line with the HSE guidance
 - Consulting with your workers or trade unions
 - Sharing the results of the risk assessment with your workforce and on your website

- 2** **Develop cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures**
You should increase the frequency of handwashing and surface cleaning by:
 - Encouraging people to follow the guidance on hand washing and hygiene
 - Providing hand sanitiser around the workplace, in addition to washrooms
 - Frequently cleaning and disinfecting objects and surfaces that are touched regularly
 - Enhancing cleaning for busy areas
 - Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets
 - Providing hand drying facilities – either paper towels or electrical dryers

- 3** **Help people to work from home**
You should take all reasonable steps to help people work from home by:
 - Discussing home working arrangements
 - Ensuring they have the right equipment, for example remote access to work systems
 - Including them in all necessary communications
 - Looking after their physical and mental wellbeing

- 4** **Maintain 2m social distancing, where possible**
You should maintain 2m between people by:
 - Putting up signs to remind workers and visitors of social distancing guidance
 - Avoiding sharing workstations
 - Using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a 2m distance

- Arranging one-way traffic through the workplace if possible
- Switching to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible

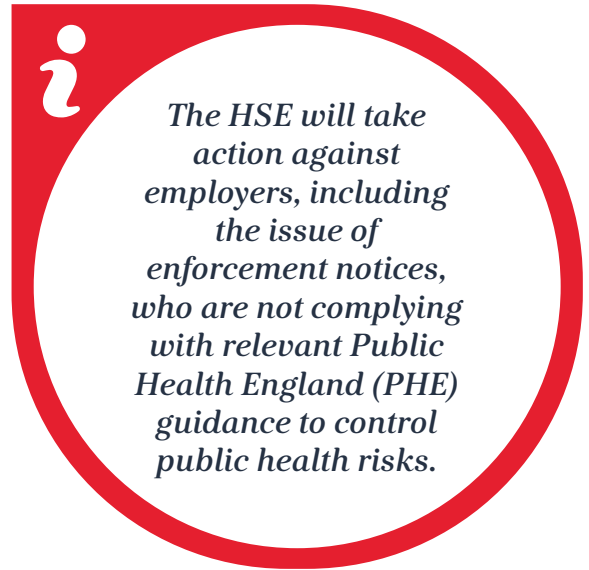
5 Where people cannot be 2m apart, manage transmission risk

Where it's not possible for people to be 2m apart, you should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:

- Considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
- 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 whenever possible
- Staggering arrival and departure times
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

Since the publication of the first Coronavirus restriction regulations in March 2020, there has been relaxations to the restrictions on

gatherings. However current regulations nationally allow gathering in a public or private place; **'for work or the provision of voluntary or charitable services.'**



Where social distancing measures cannot be carried out for a particular activity it must be considered whether that activity needs to be carried out.

STRATEGY FOR A RETURN TO WORK

A new specific risk assessment to control the hazard of Coronavirus must be prepared. You should prepare a management plan for your intended restart. The IWA has prepared a template for a management plan to return to work during the Coronavirus outbreak. A link to the template is given on p.9.

IWA has prepared an example risk assessment to address the specific hazard of Coronavirus, which is available on the website, a link is included on p.9. The risk assessment is for use in addition to any risk assessments already in place for your activities and should be edited to reflect the specific conditions on your site.

Consult your volunteers / workers about arrangements for a return to work;

You must consult your workers about matters concerning their health and safety, which is a two-way process and allows them to

express their concerns. It allows you to explain the changes that are being made to get their thoughts and ideas on how to make the changes. The discussions will need to be repeated if something changes, such as lock-down and guidelines change or the changes that have been made are not working.

Subjects that should be discussed are:

- 1 Social distancing
- 2 Organising your workplace
- 3 Cleaning and sanitising
- 4 Information and guidance
- 5 Wellbeing and support

The HSE has published a guide – Talking to your workers about preventing Coronavirus. A link to the guide is included on p.9.



Carry out a review of existing risk assessments and method statement to make sure any changes as a result of the risks associated with Coronavirus have been taken into account. Review your Construction Phase Plan (Project Plan) to take account of the risks associated with Coronavirus in particular any emergency planning and procedures.

You will need to check with suppliers that anything that you need to restart will be available. Pay particular attention to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Your risk assessment may require that additional PPE items, such as face covering, are provided or that PPE should be changed more regularly.

Make sure that you have enough cleaning equipment to allow for a more frequent cleaning regime. Note face coverings are not compulsory but provide additional protection against the spread of the virus. The government has issued guidance on how to make your own face covering. A link is provided on p.9.

When deciding on a possible restart you need to consider your volunteer work force and the possibility that they may be in the clinically vulnerable group. Volunteers in the clinically vulnerable group may return to the work party but should be given duties that allow them to socially distance. Volunteers in the clinically extremely vulnerable group have been advised to stay at home.

Clinically vulnerable people are:

- ① Aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- ② Under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (that is, anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
 - Chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
 - Chronic heart disease, heart failure
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - Chronic liver disease, hepatitis
 - Chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), or cerebral palsy
 - Diabetes
 - A weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets
 - Being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- ③ Pregnant women



GUIDANCE NOTE

Consider whether volunteers will need to organise child care. Ensure volunteers do not attend site if they have symptoms of Coronavirus (elevated temperature, continuous coughing or loss of smell/taste) or anybody in their household or support bubble is self-isolating or they have been contacted by the NHS test and trace service. Recommend that volunteers take their temperature before leaving home and if their temperature is above 38°C they should stay at home. Travel to the work site should be in separate vehicles, by walking or cycling and avoid public transport where possible. Make sure you will have sufficient numbers of volunteers to carry out your planned activities. If volunteers travel to site by public transport they must wear a face covering and socially distance where possible.



At the start of each work party make a record of attendees and visitors and a contact number. In the event that a volunteers falls ill during or immediately after the work party and reports a positive Coronavirus test result, you will need to advise all attendees to monitor their condition. People who have been in close contact with the volunteer should self-isolate for 7 days or until a negative test for Coronavirus has been received.

Ensure that any statutory tests and inspections haven't lapsed during the lock-down. Check any alarm systems that may have developed a fault while the site has been in lock-down. Check the site for vandalism.

If you decide to return to work, you must display a notice that you have complied with the Government's five steps, a link to a notice is included on p.9.

Volunteers will need to be given an induction setting out site rules to take account of the risk of Coronavirus including:

- ① Do not attend the work party if you feel unwell, have a temperature or if anybody in your household or support bubble is self-isolating.
- ② Clean hands regularly with soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds especially after nose blowing, sneezing or coughing, on arrival on site, before and after eating, after using public transport and when arriving at home. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitisers should be used.
- ③ Keep 2 metres apart as much as possible and keep 2m away from members of the public, or 1 metre plus with risk mitigation where 2 metres is not possible.
- ④ Minimise contact between volunteers and where it is necessary, limit contact time to 15 minutes or less. Consider the use of face coverings where contact cannot be avoided.
- ⑤ Keep groups of volunteers together in teams that are as small as possible (cohorting).
- ⑥ Clean hands before entering enclosed machinery, such as excavators and cabs of dumpers, and again on exit.
- ⑦ Keep windows of enclosed machinery open to allow ventilation and advise operators not to touch their face.
- ⑧ Clean down the insides of cabs, particularly between operators.
- ⑨ Remind volunteers to clean clothes regularly, the virus can stay on fabrics.



1 metre plus rules include the following further mitigating measures:

- ① Further increasing the frequency of hand cleaning and surface cleaning
- ② Keeping the activity involved as short as possible
- ③ Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
- ④ Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible
- ⑤ 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)



The Construction Leadership Council has produced an operating procedure for protecting your workforce and a link is provided on p.9. Other information is available from BuildUK and the Mineral Products Association, and links to their websites is given on p.9. This information is likely to be updated regularly.

Welfare and mess facilities will need to be cleaned after each use. Rest areas will need to be large enough to continue social distancing and should be well ventilated. Stagger rest breaks to limit the size of groups in a rest area to 6 or less at any one time. Any temporary rest areas should be set up away from members of the public or where members of the public have access. Consider what might be touched and where cross contamination might take place. Clean surfaces between use wherever possible.

Consider operating a one-way access system for travelling between the work area and rest facilities.

For activities that are carried out in the open, such as litter picking, painting, vegetation control, where it is not possible to follow the social distancing guidelines, consider whether that activity needs to continue.

If you decide to return to these activities you will need to prepare a risk assessment to take account of Coronavirus. Volunteers will need to be given instruction on actions that they need to take to reduce the risk of transmission of Coronavirus between volunteers and members of the public. Warning signs should be placed to warn members of the public that volunteers are working and that they should maintain a distance of 2 metres.

You should make sure that any PPE required for the activity is available in sufficient number for your volunteers and you should make allowance for more regular changes of PPE. Instructions will include:

- ① Do not attend the work party if you feel unwell, have a temperature or if anybody in your household is self-isolating.
- ② Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser on arrival.
- ③ If volunteers cannot keep 2 metres apart they should work side by side or back to back if possible and consider wearing face masks.
- ④ They should wear gloves and wash their hands in soap and water for at least 20 seconds more regularly or use hand sanitiser.
- ⑤ Volunteers who share an enclosed space should keep the windows open to allow ventilation and should be told not to touch their face and should wash their hands when they leave the enclosed space.
- ⑥ When interacting with members of the public, volunteers should maintain a distance of 2 metres as much as possible.

Your first aid provision will need to be reviewed. Additional PPE will be required for first aiders, including face mask, apron and latex gloves. If you need to carry out cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) do not perform rescue breaths or mouth to mouth ventilation. Use chest compressions only. For CPR in children chest compression is not effective and rescue breaths or mouth to mouth ventilation will be required, use a resuscitation face shield where available. If you give rescue breaths or mouth to mouth ventilation monitor yourself for symptoms of Coronavirus over the next 10 days.

For all activities you need to consider what you should do if somebody falls ill during the work party. They may need to self-isolate and you should consider where that self-isolation would take place, normally the vehicle they arrived in. The volunteer should be sent home and advised to stay at home.



You should develop a plan in the eventuality that an ill volunteer needs to be transferred to a health facility. Keep a record of all volunteers and visitors. If a volunteer falls ill during or after your event you should contact all attendees and visitors.

The government has introduced a 'Test and Trace' service to help control the spread of Coronavirus. If a volunteers develops symptoms of Coronavirus they should self-isolate for 7 days. They should order a Coronavirus test and if the test is positive should continue with the self-isolation. They should advise other members of their household to self-isolate for 10 days and notify anybody they have had close contact with to self-isolate. More details can be found from the link on p.9. The NHS have developed a COVID-19 app which can be downloaded for free. It is the fastest way to see if you're at risk from Coronavirus. A link can be found on p.9.

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) cases of, or deaths from, Covid-19 as a result of occupational exposure need to be reported.

You should make a report under RIDDOR when one of the following circumstances applies:

- ① An accident or incident at work has, or could have, led to the release or escape of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). This must be reported as a dangerous occurrence
- ② A person at work (a worker) has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 attributed to an occupational exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a case of disease
- ③ A worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a work-related death due to exposure to a biological agent

A link to the HSE website relating to reporting Covid-19 cases is given on p.9.

Meetings and events held inside have been suspended and IWA / WRG is encouraging members to hold video meetings / conferences where at all possible. There are other reasons why this approach should continue when restrictions are eased.

USEFUL RESOURCES:

[Government statement](#)

[Government guidelines for working safely](#)

[CRT response to Coronavirus](#)

[HSE Guidance, latest information and advice](#)

[HSE Short guide for working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[IWA Covid 19 statement](#)

[Construction Leadership Council Procedures](#)

[Mineral Products Association Pocket Guides](#)

[BuildUK website](#)

[IWA Covid-19 risk assessment, management plan template & display notice](#)

[How to wear and make a face mask](#)

[HSE Talking to your workers about preventing Coronavirus](#)

[CRT's risk assessment principles](#)

[NHS test and trace service](#)

[Guidance for first responders](#)

[HSE First Aid during Coronavirus](#)

[Construction response to Coronavirus](#)

[NCVO Coronavirus guidance](#)

[HSE requirements for reporting cases of Covid-19](#)

[Government guidance Reopen your business during Coronavirus](#)

[Government Advice on areas with local restrictions](#)

[NHS Covid-19 support App](#)



WORK PARTY ACTIVITIES DURING CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS

