



# Safe working for landscapers to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread

**The following document has been informed by the relevant government bodies as a recommendation of best practice regarding safe distancing and working guidelines to protect your staff.**

**We strongly recommend that you encourage your staff to follow these guidelines.**



The Horticultural Trades Association (HTA) has developed and issued this guidance in line with current government advice. The HTA assumes no responsibility or liability for any harm that comes to you, any member of staff, client or supplier, regardless of whether you have followed the guidelines or not.

# Social distancing advice



## Social distancing advice to support landscapers developing safe working practices to reduce Covid-19 spread.

**It is essential that all businesses carry out a full risk assessment of their entire site and operations before work commences. This should become part of your planning and if applicable part of your construction phase plan to comply with CDM regulations 2015.**

If you have fewer than five workers, or are self-employed, you don't have to write anything down as part of your risk assessment but you will still have to produce a construction phase plan as part of your CDM 2015 documentation.

As an employer you must consult your workers on health and safety. Talk to them about how you will manage Covid-19 risks and involve them in the decision-making process. By involving staff in making decisions you make it clear that you regard their health and safety as important.

Each business is responsible, not only for providing a safe working environment with safe systems of work, but also for providing adequate information, supervision and training to ensure that all workers are aware of current safe distancing advice and that any risk to them is kept to a minimum.

Please be aware that in the update of 11th May, the Government has stressed that they will be tightening up penalties for any individual or business not operating within the guidelines. Local authorities will be tasked to monitor for compliance and any site or business which breaches the law will be given a fixed penalty notice and a prohibition notice. They have stated that businesses continuing to contravene the law will be closed down. If fines are not paid, businesses and individuals may also be taken to court.

The information below outlines current safe distancing advice and safe working practices to mitigate risk from and reduce the spread of Covid-19. It is also important to check for advice updates on the relevant websites, details of which are given at the end of this document.

It is very important for workers to understand the guidelines by which they should or should not travel to work.

Self Isolation - Anyone who has a high temperature or new persistent cough or lives with someone who has developed symptoms of coronavirus within the last 14 days should not come to site.

Anyone who is at increased risk of severe illness from Covid 19 is strongly advised not to attend work and should be particularly stringent about following social distancing measures.

Anyone living with a person who is at increased risk of severe illness or a vulnerable person who is shielding should stringently follow the guidance on social distancing and minimise contact outside of the home.

### **If someone falls ill on site**

If a member of staff develops a high temperature or persistent cough while at work they should:

- Ensure their manager or supervisor is informed.
- Return home immediately, following all travel guidance.
- Avoid touching anything.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin. If they do not have tissues, cough or sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- They must then follow the guidance on self isolation and not return to work until their period of self isolation has been completed.



## Transport to and from site

The responsibility to provide a safe working environment which prevents or mitigates risks to the safety of staff extends not only to the working environment but also to travel to and from work.

- Wherever possible workers should travel to site alone using either their own transport or company vehicles. If workers have no option but to share transport, then the following guidelines should be followed:
  - Journeys should be shared with individuals from the same household, or consistently the same team. A minimum number of people should travel at any one time.
  - All vehicles must be well ventilated, with the windows open and occupants should face away from each other to reduce the risk of virus transmission. A covering of the mouth and nose would be advisable. This does not have to comply to PPE regulations.
- Company vehicles must be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, particular emphasis must be given to cleaning door handles, window-switches, steering wheels and areas where drivers and passengers may touch surfaces.
- If private vehicles are used by people from several different households, they should be cleaned regularly with standard cleaning products. Care must be taken when cleaning door handles, window-switches, steering wheels, etc.
- Sites should consider parking arrangements for extra vehicles, particularly in private domestic situations.
- Where public transport is the only option, you should consider staggering start times to reduce congestion and avoid peak times of travel.

## Arrival on site

- Stop all non-essential visits to site.
- Plan site access and exit points that enable social distancing. Also take into account access for deliveries and emergency services.
- Use signage wherever possible advising individuals outside of your business they are entering a restricted area.
- Brief each member of staff about the social distancing requirements.
- Require all staff and visitors to wash their hands when entering or leaving site:
  - Wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water.
  - Provide hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol based) where hand washing facilities not available.
  - Hand washing/sanitising is essential on arrival at work, before and after using public transport, and before and after eating or drinking, sneezing or coughing.
  - Avoid touching the face.
  - No hand shaking or other body contact.
  - When sneezing or coughing use tissues or, if unavailable, cough/sneeze into the elbow. Dispose of tissues properly
- Describe the symptoms of Covid-19 to staff and make clear the latest government requirements for self-isolation If they have Covid-19 symptoms or share accommodation with someone who has.
- Remind staff that they should only come to work if they are well and if no-one in their house/accommodation is unwell or self-isolating.
- Keep records of Coronavirus training given to staff, including the date, full name, information given.



## Site Planning

- Plan so that the minimum number of workers needed are at work in order for the site to operate safely.
- Consider installing hand-washing and hand-sanitizing stations and keep these supplied with soap, water or alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer is only effective on hands/surfaces which are visibly clean i.e. not soil/compost covered, so if no soap and water is available, it may be necessary for workers to use hand wipes before using the sanitizer.
- Disinfect frequently-touched points regularly e.g. tools, machinery switches and vehicles.
- Portable toilets must be provided on all sites. These should be cleaned and emptied more frequently. Hands should be washed or sanitized before and after use and there must be provision of sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.
- Wherever possible staff should be encouraged to bring their own food to site. Once on site, they should avoid leaving site. Staff breaks should adhere to social distancing rules (2m space) and all waste should be disposed of immediately.
- Where possible arrangements should be made that individuals have their own sets of tools and hand tool sharing is eliminated. If this is not possible cleaning procedures must be put in place.
- Provide disposable paper towels and tissues for staff use, together with bins designated for their disposal.

## Working Safely on Site

- Each morning a manager, Foreman or team leader should ask each member of staff if they are symptom free. That person will have responsibility for the monitoring of all staff and ensuring that, if there is any doubt as to their fitness, they leave the workplace.
- If it is not possible to follow social distancing guidelines for a given activity, then you must consider whether that activity is essential for the work to continue. If the work is essential, then all possible mitigating action must be taken so that the risk of Covid-19 transmission is reduced.
- Where social distancing measures cannot be applied you should:
  - Minimise the frequency and time where workers are within 2 metres of each other.
  - Minimise the number of workers involved in the task.
  - Workers should work side by side or away from each other, rather than face to face.
  - Keep groups of workers that have to work within two metres together as teams.
  - Where face to face work is essential to carry out a task, keep this to 15 minutes or less, where possible.
  - Always consider enhanced authorisation for these tasks and ensure adequate supervision.
- Consider designating machinery use to a limited or single member of the team. Ensure staff wash or sanitize their hands each and every time that they get into or out of enclosed machinery (e.g. excavators, dumpers, forklifts with cabs).



- The windows/vents of any enclosed machinery or other enclosed space should be kept open to allow ventilation. The internal surfaces of cabs, door handles etc should be cleaned regularly, particularly if the machinery is used by more than one operator.
- Where loading and offloading arrangements on site will allow it, drivers should remain in their vehicles. Where they are required to exit, they should wash or sanitize their hands before handling any materials.
- Where needed, PPE must continue to be worn in line with current guidance. Any PPE used must be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions and replaced/disinfected as necessary. Incorrect use may increase the risk to workers, for example if contaminated gloves are used, they pose a higher risk than properly washed/sanitized hands.
- Use of PPE is not a substitute for social distancing practices, and this should be pointed out to staff.
- Any worker choosing to wear face-coverings should be supported by their employer. They should be reminded to use their chosen face covering according to the manufacturer's instructions, thoroughly wash or sanitize their hands before putting on a face covering and after its removal; and they should be reminded not to touch their face covering when wearing it as this could cause contamination, and to change it should it become damp or if they have touched it. They should also be reminded that they must still observe social distancing and other guidelines
- There is to be no face- to-face contact with clients. This includes acceptance of refreshments. It is advised that all communication is completed electronically. Should there be no alternative, then social distancing guidance MUST be adhered to.
- When planning site activities, the provision of first aid resources must be agreed by all parties on site.
- Emergency plans including contact details must be kept up to date.
- Consideration should be given to potential delays in emergency services response times due to current pressures on resources.
- Consider preventing or rescheduling high risk work.
- If there is an emergency (e.g. an accident) staff do not have to observe the 2m rule if it would not be safe to do so. Anyone who has given assistance to others should always ensure they wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after the event.
- The primary responsibility is to preserve life and first aid should be administered until the emergency services arrive.
- If there is an emergency (e.g. an accident or fire) staff do not have to observe the 2m rule if it would not be safe to do so. Anyone who has given assistance to others should always ensure they wash their hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after the event.

# Useful links



This document was informed using information from sources listed below.

- > <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>
- > Updates on safe working practices will be available at <https://www.gov.uk/workingsafely>
- > <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-individuals-and-businesses-in-scotland>
- > <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
- > <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-business-and-employers>
- > <https://businesswales.gov.wales/coronavirus-advice>
- > <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>
- > <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>
- > <https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19>
- > <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>
- > <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb961bfe90e070834b6675f/working-safely-during-covid-19-construction-outdoors-110520.pdf>
- > <https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/news/site-operating-procedures-during-covid-19/>
- > <https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/social-distancing-coronavirus.htm>

## Please note

Given the multi and varied nature of nursery enterprises, it is the responsibility of all businesses to carry out their own risk assessments in relation to everything contained within this document.



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We'll get through  
this together