

Network Rail: Good Practice Guidelines for Maintenance Site Working during the Coronavirus Virus

1) Introduction

- a) It is really important that we care for each other at this difficult time. Our work is vital to keeping the country connected, carrying critical care workers and transporting essential goods; helping our country to fight the virus and keep people from unnecessary harm. In doing this important work, we must look out for ourselves and each other, so that we can keep safe and help prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.
- b) There can be no one size fits all approach, because circumstances differ across our organisation. But we have pulled together best practice from across the industry and other sectors, both domestically and internationally, and from healthcare professionals. These are set out below.

2) Overview – social distancing

- a) The social distancing guidelines endeavour to limit the spread of Covid-19 and are set out below:
 - (1) *Maintain two metres distance between yourself and other people*
 - (2) *Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough*
 - (3) *Avoid non-essential use of public transport where possible.*
- b) We recognise that because of the nature of some of our work, it will not always be possible for colleagues to maintain a two metre distance from each other, as recommended for social distancing. We will do our very best to minimise these circumstances, and we ask colleagues to look out for each other and themselves as well.
- c) Maintenance work that is necessary to ensure the safe and reliable operation of the network must continue. Sometimes, in order to do this work, it's not possible to comply with the social distancing guidelines. We will update our task risk control sheets to give clear guidance on when social distancing is not possible. The controls will be detailed as part of our safe work packs.
- d) In general, all practicable measures should be adopted, where possible, to minimise the likelihood of transmission or exposure to Covid-19.

3) Travelling to the worksite

- a) Wash your hands and/ or use hand sanitiser prior to entering the vehicle
- b) Home Start has been enabled for some teams, allowing vehicles to be taken home in order to get back to work for the next shift. This is being completed with IMDM approval
- c) We have agreed with HMRC that they are relaxing the rules around use of private vehicles to enable staff to get to site, however if possible, you should utilise a Network Rail vehicle if available

- d) Reducing the amount of shared transport. Where shared transport is necessary, maintain an airflow in the vehicle i.e. windows opened appropriately
- e) Send the minimum number of people to depots to pick up kit and replenish spares
- f) At the start of work, briefs will be provided to help remind staff of the precautions that are required to minimise the risk from COVID19
 - (1) This will also remind staff of the need for good hygiene and use of PPE
- g) Wipe the surfaces around you at the end of your journey including door handles
- h) If you share the vehicle, wear a clean set of gloves for driving and also use disposable gloves when filling up the vehicle at service stations
- i) The number of staff in a van can be reduced by using other vehicles and if essential your own vehicle (HMRC have relaxed the rules around private use, Network Rail have extended our insurance for this purpose but please note you **must** still have insurance for your vehicle).
- j) If hotel accommodation is provided to support projects away from the home station then Capita will support us and ensure the accommodation is safe, clean and available
- k) **Testing**
 - (1) Where possible, several sites are moving to bringing in optical temperature testing, to detect high temperatures in people at the sign in point by the Site Access Team, or works leader
 - (2) We have also ordered Covid-19 screening kits which are due to arrive in April. We are working through the procedures to put these into active use

4) At site

- a) At sign in points staff must maintain segregation. Keep two metres apart when signing in. Section Managers/Supervisors are responsible for cleaning the sign in area. Persons in charge will record who is with their work group to avoid the need for forms to be shared.
 - a) In briefings, site meetings or tasks reduce the number of people involved to a minimum safe number. Remember to spread your team to maintain the two metre spacing. **The picture below is a powerful image on what is possible.**
 - b) Some mess rooms have been physically segregated into separate (eg Red / Blue areas) to minimise contact.
 - c) Some meeting rooms are now acting as mess rooms so e.g. Red / Blue teams don't interact and maintain social distancing.
 - d) Stagger start (and finishing) times for different teams to minimise interaction
- Conduct handovers, safety briefings and safety hours over the phone or Skype where possible. If briefings need to be done in person, do them outside in the fresh air, and stay two metres apart

5) Working at site

- a) As with all safety measures, you and your team must ensure that safety procedures are always adhered to and no short cuts taken with tasks. Normal working methods and practices in line with company standards still apply, and adherence to relevant company standards is expected. This is important – keep safe so we don't have to take colleagues to A&E. This is especially important when the NHS is under such pressure and where there are increasing numbers of cases of Covid-19
- b) If a work task can be done in a way that keeps you two metres apart and keeps you safe, be empowered to do that
- c) Please observe task risk specific good practice sheets where relevant
- d) Employees are encouraged to bring their own prepared food to site, if possible. Employees can consider whether they wish to bring their own cutlery and plate, mug etc to work. Don't make rounds of drinks or food for your colleagues. Do not share drinking cups
- e) Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds
- f) Refrain from spitting
- g) Some sites are splitting into different teams, eg Red and Blue teams for all office teams, to minimise face to face interaction during this Covid-19 period, to try to reduce its spread
- h) We've agreed with Trade Unions that rosters can be altered at short notice when required i.e. someone off sick or isolating at short notice
- i) Avoid passing around paperwork and sharing of pens that are not cleaned after each use – where this is unavoidable consider the use of disposable gloves and wash hands afterwards
- j) Don't share communication equipment, where possible. Where this is unavoidable, please clean the equipment once you have finished using it
- k) Remind others to keep their distance, where it is possible for them to do so
- l) Keep as far apart as you can – eg lift items from the furthest points as possible and safe to do so. Consider mechanisation where possible to avoid close contact

6) PPE

- a) Please continue to wear full PPE in the usual way – as well as helping towards keeping you safe, it may offer additional protection from Covid-19.
- a) In particular, using Network Rail safety gloves and safety glasses could significantly reduce the spread of the virus;
 - i) Wearing gloves helps to keep your hands clean and discourages people from putting fingers near mouths, nose or eyes. Remember to wash your hands after removing gloves.
 - ii) Use of safety glasses discourages people from touching eyes

- b) Always use your own PPE
- c) If it is possible for you to clean and change your coveralls after each shift, this is recommended. We appreciate this may not be possible everywhere
- d) We are looking into additional PPE measures, for example, masks, but as has been widely documented in the media, there is an international shortfall of these items and the full benefit in protection from Covid-19 is not yet clear. Some of you may be used to wearing a mask (FFP3 or air fed for railway works in conditions where ballast dust may be evident) so please continue to wear these as required. We are continuing to look at additional PPE measures in relation to Covid-19 and this may be the subject of future announcements

7) Cleaning

- a) Vehicles and equipment should be cleaned using disinfectant, cleaning products and paper towels if available.
- b) For shared vehicles, at the start and end of shift, use a disinfectant wipe to wipe surface around the steering wheel, dashboard, door handles, seat belt, hand brake etc
- c) The cleaning of cabs for road rail plant will need to be completed between shifts. This is currently being completed by the operator with cleaning products and wipes. We are also looking at other ways of supporting this process
- d) All items used for cleaning should be collected in the same disposal bag and marked so that it can be disposed of accordingly.

8) Developing symptoms at work

- a) If you become unwell in the workplace with Covid-19 symptoms (a continuous cough or a high temperature) you should:
 - i) inform your line manager immediately and go home
 - ii) avoid touching anything
 - iii) cough or sneeze into a tissue and put it in a bin immediately
 - iv) If you do not have a tissue, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow.

9) Conclusion and thanks

You are encouraged to maintain contact with your line manager and members of your team, and to look after your own and their colleagues mental and physical wellbeing.

Thank you for all the incredible work you are doing to keep the railway running.