



# **COVID-19 SAFE WORKING POLICY**

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## **POLICY**

The health and wellbeing of Quality & Service Limited (Q&S) staff and operatives is of the utmost importance to us, whether it be within our offices or on one of our sites. We have made several changes to enable our management and office staff to work remotely, when/if required, ensuring that we only have the minimum required members of staff in the offices at any time. Anyone who falls in the 'high risk' category for infection will work from home 100% of the time.

All Q&S sites that are operating during the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic need to ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

In addition to the measures outlined in this document, which aim to protect against the spread of COVID-19, all landscape activities must continue to comply with existing health and safety regulations. Tasks must not be undertaken if the safety of operatives and third parties cannot be ensured.

As with the risks associated with any other work task, the risk posed by COVID-19 must be managed to the lowest reasonably practicable level. The ideal order to follow when reducing risk is outlined below, together with suggested considerations.

### **Elimination**

It is not currently possible to eliminate the risk of COVID-19 from a site-based work environment. Only working remotely from home will eliminate the risk of spreading infection to stakeholders.

### **Substitution**

- Workers who are unwell or displaying symptoms should remain at home (see Before leaving the house section of this document)
- Prohibit all non-essential visitors to site
- Reorganise tasks so they require one person to complete
- Increase hygiene throughout working day (See office, yard and communal areas and on-site sections of this document)
- Practice social distancing always
- Essential physical work requiring close contact between workers should be undertaken with controls (see on site section of this document)

### **Engineering control**

- Use additional tools, equipment, and vehicles to avoid close contact between workers (see on site section of this document)
- Install temporary barriers in vehicles and workplace

**Administrative control**

- Enforce strict hygiene measures including frequent hand washing
- Prohibit sharing of PPE between employees
- Train workers via toolbox talks, meetings, posters, and other information
- Staggering work shifts or visits to sites
- Encourage fixed teaming (and maintaining same team members to minimise potential for spread)
- Implement designated access and egress points for enclosed areas (see office, yard, and communal areas in this document)
- Use signage and floor markings to remind stakeholders
- Use one-way systems in enclosed areas

**Personal protective equipment**

- Operatives may wish to wear 'face coverings', as defined by the government in their Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work document  
NOTE: Use of 'face coverings' is not a substitution for a FFP3 face mask

**Before employees return to work**

Q&S will provide clear, consistent, and regular communication with our employees to improve understanding and consistency of way of working.

We will engage with our employees to explain any changes in working arrangements, and outline the measures taken by the company to reduce the risk from COVID-19.

Q&S will ensure that prior to employees returning to work they are updated on new procedures and working practices.

Follow this conversation when staff return to ensure they understand the measures and record the details of this, and any training undertaken

**Before employees leave the house for each shift**

Anyone who meets one of the following criteria should not come into work but report in via telephone to their line manager, and follow guidance on self-isolation:

- Has a high temperature or a new persistent cough
- Is vulnerable by virtue of their age, underlying health condition, clinical condition or are pregnant.
- Follow the link below to identify individuals who are at high risk:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/>
- Is living with someone in self-isolation or a vulnerable person
- See the following link for more information if you meet any of the criteria above:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms-and-what-to-do/>

**Procedure if Someone Falls Ill whilst at work:**

If a worker develops a high temperature (100.4°F (38°C) or a persistent cough whilst at work, they should:

- Be removed to a safe / remote area, avoid touching anything and management informed
- Arrangements made for their safe transit to their home address
- Return home immediately and follow guidance on self-isolation until their period of self-isolation has been completed.
- Please see link below for more information on self-isolation:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-homeguidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

**Office, yard, and communal areas**

- Clearly communicate procedures and policies surrounding COVID-19 to employees
- Keep a record of staff who have been notified of new procedures
- Use signs and notices to reinforce staff responsibilities
- Stop all non-essential visitors to office, yard, and communal areas
- Consider implementing designated access and egress points for enclosed areas
- Use signage and floor markings to remind staff and visitors of the need to maintain distancing
- Consider use of one-way systems
- Frequently clean bathrooms and wash facilities.  
Clean using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Identify common contact surfaces (e.g. Office doors, desks, printers, screens, keyboards, gates, intercom buttons, fuel pumps/bowsers) and ensure these are regularly cleaned
- Implement measures to monitor compliance
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied each day

**Driving / Travelling**

To ensure we are doing everything possible to reduce the risk of infection and spread, the following social distancing and protective measures have been put in place:

- Always maintain operative social distancing, operatives split into fixed teams / shifts, with start times staggered to ensure that where contact is unavoidable, this happens between the same operatives
- Minimise non-essential travel, but where required minimise the number of people travelling together in any one vehicle

- Mitigate risks by:
  - ❖ Using fixed travel partners / consistently the same two operatives (team members)
  - ❖ Increasing ventilation by opening windows
  - ❖ Ensuring middle seat in the cab is not occupied, therefore allowing maximum distance between occupants, ensure sitting side by side to avoid face-to-face interaction
  - ❖ Wearing of face coverings whilst inside vehicles
  - ❖ Personal Hygiene – when entering/leaving the vehicle, operatives are to either wash their hand or use hand sanitiser
  - ❖ Vehicle Hygiene - Frequently clean vehicles with sanitiser, paying attention to all hard surfaces in vehicles (steering wheel, dashboard, and door handles etc). Only use sanitisers which contain at least 60% alcohol (not baby wipes). Ensure personal litter removed at the end of the day
- Where it is not possible for operatives to remain 2m apart, they should work side by side or facing away from each-other rather than face to face.
- Cleaning of machinery and tools regularly with antivirus products, thorough clean of tools/machinery and vehicles before transferring to other operational teams where necessary
- Wearing of face coverings whilst on public transport to and from site and whilst in enclosed or highly populated areas
- Discourage the purchasing of food and drink from supermarkets and garages whilst travelling between site(s). Encourage the use of pre-prepared meals and drinks.

Wherever possible workers should travel to site alone using their own transport and sites need to consider:

- Parking arrangements for additional cars and bicycles
- Other means of transport to avoid public transport e.g. cycling
- Providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if water is not available
- How someone taken ill would get home.

#### **On Client Sites**

- Always abide by Client site specific procedures and protocols
- Stop all non-essential visitors to site
- Stagger start times for staff to reduce peak flow of staff entering and leaving the premises
- Keep a record of any company visitors or sub-contractors who attend site, to assist with contract tracing if required
- Consider staggering work shifts or visits to sites
- Ensure soap and fresh water is used where it is readily available
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Encourage frequent hand washing, especially on arrival, before meals, at the end of the day and after removing gloves, masks, and personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Review induction and training procedures Hold events outside where possible and ensure social distancing guidelines are adhered to
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging or close contact
- Maintain a 2-metre distance between each employee as well as clients
- Cease non-essential physical work requiring close contact between workers (e.g. two-person lifting or loading)
- Essential physical work requiring close contact between workers should be undertaken with the following controls:
  - ❖ Reduce weight of load where possible (i.e. smaller quantity or fewer items)
  - ❖ Using lifting equipment
  - ❖ Use back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) if possible
  - ❖ Encourage the use of fixed physical working partners
- Be mindful that some workers may become lone workers because of measures taken to ensure social distancing. These employees must be managed appropriately and in accordance with a lone working policy
- Discourage employees from using other employees' phones, tools, and equipment

**Toilets/Canteen/Site Offices:**

- Restrict the number of people using welfare facilities at any one time, stagger breaks as much as possible. Ensure that surfaces are wiped down between uses
- Wash hands before and after using the facilities
- Provide sufficient bins for hand towels and ensure they emptied regularly.
- Ensure that all door handles, kettles, microwaves, and toasters are cleaned after every use – where this is not possible, remove them from site. Bring pre-prepared meals wherever possible.
- Always maintain 2m separation.
- Ensure that rubbish is being removed from site daily
- Ensure gloves are worn when touching waste and bins

**PPE and equipment**

- Face coverings should not be considered a replacement for correct PPE
- Frequently clean with sanitiser all equipment and frequently touched surfaces
- Limit tools and equipment to individual employees if possible
- Provide adequate soap/sanitiser, single use towels for each shift
- Promote the importance of wearing gloves
- Do not share PPE, especially masks and respirators and anything that comes directly into contact with skin
- Clean PPE after each use with warm water and detergent
- Safely discard any contaminated or single use PPE
- Store all PPE in sealed containers and only open new PPE as needed

**Site/Team Meetings**

- Only participants that are absolutely necessary should attend. Use Teams and other means where possible
- Consider holding meetings in open areas where possible, maintaining the 2m rule
- Attendees should be two metres apart from each other
- Rooms should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation

These are exceptional circumstances and Q&S will always continue to comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus.

**Useful links**

Government document: Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb961bfe90e070834b6675f/working-safely-during-covid-19-construction-outdoors-110520.pdf>

Construction leadership council: Site operating procedures

<https://www.constructionleadershipcouncil.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Site-OperatingProcedures-Version-3.pdf>

HSE: Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

**STAY SAFE EVERYONE**

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