

Health and Safety Toolbox Talk No: 138

Home visits and Covid-19 (Coronavirus)



The following guidance is issued for employees when:

- undertaking visits to businesses, private residences and other sites and/or
- other external contact as part of their day-to-day duties;

Visits to business premises, home and site visits

Employees should have regard to the following when planning and performing visits.

Work carried out in people's homes, for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms.

If you do have symptoms, or a member of your household has any symptoms, you should self-isolate and stay away from public areas for the requisite periods.

BEFORE the visit: Is the visit necessary or could the purpose of the visit be achieved equally effectively by way of a non face-to-face intervention for example by way of a telephone call, conference call?

On determining that a face-to-face visit is required, where possible establish as much information in advance of the visit by phoning the agent, business owner, client or resident to ascertain if they and/or their employees is/are in self-isolation and if they are asymptomatic or symptomatic, or they meet the shielding category prior to the planned visit;

If the tenant / occupant informs you that they do not want anyone to come to their home as

- They or others within the premises, fall into the Government's vulnerable people category (they are aged 70 or over and/or are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus);

Or

- They or others within the premises, are self-isolating because they fall into the Government's shielded category;

Or

- They or others within the premises has or suspects they have the COVID-19 infection, and they are self-isolating for 14 days.



You can delay completing the safety checks until after the tenant's occupant's isolation period has ended. You must arrange for this to take place as soon as possible after the isolation period has ended.

You must be able demonstrate that you have taken reasonable steps to arrange and reschedule the safety check, and it is strongly recommended you document your attempts and keep records of all correspondence with your tenants / occupants.

Once this has been established, plan how to approach the visit having regard to the nature of the premises, residence or site to be visited, for example, consider if it is appropriate to avoid entering the property if the environment may be confined/poorly ventilated or be in a poor state of cleanliness.

If you must enter premises, consider the use of gloves or any hand sanitizer.

Wash your hands thoroughly before you leave for the visit.

DURING the visit

- On arrival, stand away from those you are visiting, and ask whether anyone has any symptoms, or are self-isolating. If they are, do not enter and inform them you will rearrange the visit.
- If you do enter the premises, wherever practical, please observe Public Health England guidelines, including maintaining a 2 metre distance, wherever possible) from any household occupants. This is for everyone's safety.
- Those you are visiting may ask you to wash your hands. That's OK but you will need to have paper towels to dry your hands. Do not use their towels. Or simply use a sanitiser.
- If you sneeze or cough in the course of the visit, remember to use a tissue to contain any potential airborne particles arising and dispose of the used tissue immediately in a bin or plastic bag. Ideally wash your hands immediately if possible. If no tissue is available cough or sneeze into the crease of your elbow.
- In the event of the person/s you are meeting sneezing or coughing in your presence encourage them to follow the same steps as above. If they continue to do so inappropriately, you should leave.
- Do not accept drinks or food offered in the course of the visit.
- Try to minimise touching any surfaces in the course of the visit, remembering that all hand-contact surfaces, including - door handles; taps to sinks/wash hand basins; lids to bin; - may be a source of contamination.
- If appropriate, ask to wash your hands before you leave the premises or private residence. Again, be mindful about using towels.
- Remove gloves where applicable and dispose of in plastic bag.





AFTER the visit

- Wash your hands immediately on return to the office.
- If you become aware that the person/s you visited was/were isolated thereafter as a suspected COVID-19 case, you should immediately inform your line manager/HR for further advice.
- If you develop a new continuous cough or high temperature you should self-isolate in accordance with Govt / NHS advice (seven days if you live alone, fourteen if you live with others)

COVID 19 update

To help contain the virus, office workers who can work effectively from home should do so over the winter. Where an employer, in consultation with their employee, judges an employee can carry out their normal duties from home they should do so.

Public-sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary.

Anyone else who cannot work from home should go to their place of work.

The risk of transmission can be substantially reduced if [COVID-secure guidelines](#) are followed closely. Extra consideration should be given to those people at higher risk.

Those classed as [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) can go to work as long as the workplace is COVID-19 secure, but should carry on working from home wherever possible.

There is no limit to group size when you are meeting or gathering for work purposes, but workplaces should be set up to meet the COVID-secure guidelines.

You should continue to:

- follow social distancing rules
- travel to venues or amenities that are open, for work or to access education, but aim to reduce the number of journeys you make

Information on local COVID alert levels, including what they mean, why they are being introduced and what the different levels are.

<https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions>

