

Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19)

Hazard Identified

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Most people infected with the Covid-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recovered without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.

The Covid-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Who could be affected and how?

Anyone can contract the disease through exposure. Although higher risk groups have been identified it is unknown how each individual will respond to this infection and guidance is constantly changing. Poor hygiene is likely to increase transmission of the virus as is face to face contact.

Control Measures.

Field Staff

Customer Service Operatives will ask the following:

Is anyone in the property self-isolating due to coronavirus?

Does anyone in the property have 'flu like' symptoms?

Where residents are exhibiting symptoms or self-isolating due to possible coronavirus exposure engineers will NOT be allowed to attend. Fan heaters may be left on the doorstep for the residents use so that no contact with anyone in the property is required. In this situation video soft fixing will be attempted wherever possible.

Engineers are required to ask the same questions again both when they ring ahead and on arrival at the property.

Only after it has been confirmed that it is safe, should the engineer enter the property. Once inside these practices should be adopted:

- Explain to the resident the precautions that will be taken during the visit and the reasons for this
- Confirm that the resident is prepared to adhere to social distancing measures and remain at least 2 metres away from the engineer for the duration of the visit
- Wash hands and wipe down surfaces on arrival
- Only touch surfaces where required
- Do not accept any refreshments from residents
- Do not offer the resident the tablet to sign
- Wipe down surfaces and wash hands for 20 seconds before leaving the property

All field staff have anti-bacterial wipes and surface sanitiser spray on their van stocks which should be used in addition to regular hand washing and when soap and water is unavailable. These should also be used to wipe down surfaces at the beginning of and on completion of each job. Hand sanitiser is readily available and has been issued to all engineers. This should be used regularly and whenever access to soap and water is not possible.

Gloves should be worn at every job where the contract requires it. In addition, masks may be required whenever the engineer is in the presence of others inside the property e.g Whilst walking through the property to the work area or if the resident remains in the same room whilst work takes place. Again, in some areas this is a contractual requirement, if not masks and gloves should be used at the residents' request.

Social distancing measures MUST still be observed even when the engineer is wearing full PPE and hands should be washed or hand sanitiser applied following the removal of PPE.

Where a resident is 'shielding' engineers may be required to wear additional PPE in the form of tyvek suit and overshoes. This will usually be at the request of the landlord.

If engineers are informed of the presence of 'flu-like' symptoms in the property when they attend, they should follow the 'No Access' process and pass the job back to be re-booked when the illness has passed.

Where entry to the property is unavoidable and there is a high risk of exposure to coronavirus specially trained and equipped engineers will enter to complete the job. Requests for this service must be escalated to a member of the board for approval before the job can continue.

All staff must be made aware of reporting procedures and any suspected or confirmed cases should be escalated to SHEQual department.

Members of the workforce who fall into high risk categories i.e. Over 70 years old, those with underlying medical conditions and those who are pregnant, will be required to work from home wherever possible. In the case of field staff, where working from home is impossible, they will be furloughed until the risk is over.

New information will be communicated to the workforce in a timely manner as it becomes available.