

SAFETY TOOLBOX MEETING

107 – Coronavirus COVID-19 (RW90), 17th December 2021

With the discovery of the new Omicron Variant in the UK, the Government legal requirement to wear a face covering will be extended to most indoor public venues, although it will not include public hospitality settings.

The following symptoms may appear **2-10 days after exposure**.

When symptoms appear or after a positive test result you must isolate for a full 10 days. Also, if you are still unwell seek medical advice before returning to work.

The main symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you have noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

Government Definition of Contact is:

- A person who has had face-to-face contact (within one metre), with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, including:
 - Being coughed on.
 - Having face to face conversation within one metre
 - Having skin to skin physical contact or
 - Contact within one metre for one minute or longer any amount of time without face-to-face contact.
- A person who has been within 2 metres of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes.
- You've been told you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive (NHS App).
- A person who has travelled in a small vehicle with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or in a large vehicle or plane near someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- As of August 16, if you have had 2 covid injections (double Jabbed), you do not need to self-isolate, if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. However, you must have a test ASAP.

Our Rules

- You must inform your manager immediately if you have symptoms and book a test.
- You must also show proof of any result of the Covid test (positive or negative) to your manager.
- Face coverings to be worn in all communal areas and meeting areas where SDR cannot be maintained.
- It is still compulsory to wear face coverings on public transport (TFL).
- Failure to comply with these rules will be classed as gross misconduct and you may be dismissed from the company.

- Site managers/Supervisors must inform their Contracts Manager and the Safety Team of all Covid-19 incidents and test results immediately.

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There are now 3 vaccines approved and now in use (Pfizer BioN Tech, Oxford AstraZeneca and the Moderna Vaccine) to help prevent coronavirus (COVID-19).

If you have had the vaccination and are offered a Covid Test you must inform, and prove to, the organisation testing you that you have had it. This is because you may show a positive result due to your prior vaccination.

If you have concerns about taking the vaccine because you suffer with allergic reactions, you should take Vitamin D supplements. The government recommend that each person take 400IU's a day (international recommendation). This figure/dosage is written on the bottle.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

However, as a reminder, it is recommended that everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- You must wear face coverings when travelling on public transport and when using shops.
- If you have any issues or concerns, contact the Safety Team. Peter Booth 07799 797205 or Lee Jones 07919 391226

Government & NHS advice:

- If you are unwell go straight home avoiding close contact with others.
- Book a Covid test through the NHS website.

Follow the information given to you by Track & Trace.

Also,

- **Stay home:** People who are mildly ill with COVID-19 can isolate at home during their illness. You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care.
- **Avoid public areas:** Do not go to work or public areas.
- **Avoid public transportation:** Avoid using public transportation, wherever possible.
- **Stay away from others:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Your behaviour will also be noticed when getting to your place of work and when entering shops. So, follow the latest government guidelines and wear face coverings when using public transport, this includes taxi cabs, and when shopping, including shopping centres. Your behaviour whilst travelling to and from work, and whilst on breaks, can affect the company's reputation.

It is now an offence for an employer to **knowingly** permit a worker (including an agency worker) to attend any place other than where the individual is self-isolating. This **includes** individuals who are required to self-isolate because they live with someone who has tested positive.

It is your duty to inform your line manager who in turn must inform the Safety Team if you are subject to any condition stated above. The minimum fine for a breach of this offence is £1000.

Face Coverings

Paper face coverings must not be worn for longer than 4 hours and must then be disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.

Cloth face coverings must be washed daily. Each operative has been issued with 2 masks.

Face coverings must be worn in all areas around site i.e... Offices, corridors, canteen areas (unless seated at a table), lifts, hoists, confined spaces.

Where social distancing isn't always possible and where you come into contact with others you do not normally meet.

Face coverings are not to be worn during physical activities, manual handling, erecting and dismantling scaffolds.

A face covering is not a replacement for RPE Masks. Refer back to your Method Statement for PPE requirements.

QR posters are now present on sites, operatives will need to scan their phones using the NHS track & trace APP.

Obey all the site rules and times i.e., start/finish & break times, comply with the site one-way systems. Do not congregate in any areas on site and including shops, busses, trains etc. comply with risk mitigation by wearing face coverings in Canteens/smoking sheds and communal areas. Failing to comply with these rules could put you at risk and out of work, not to mention the effect on your colleagues and the site.

Announcements

If you are planning to travel abroad, check beforehand on the Government web site to ensure you know how to comply with the Covid rules. As these rules can change regularly.

Main contractors have started to release statements informing contractors that covid measures will remain in place for the present time. This will be reviewed, and then further information will be released.

Benchmark expects all employees to respect the site rules and behave accordingly.

When medicals and training is taking place at the office, Visitors are to be reminded that covid measures are still in place and must be adhered to.

These measures will be reviewed regularly.

Below is the Risk Assessment on Covid-19 with the tasks and control measures stated.

The Hazard is: Scaffolders and all other persons affected by their acts or omissions contacting Covid-19.

The residual risk is low.

Task	Control Measures
Transportation To and from the place of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using public transport please leave earlier than normal, you may be given specific Start-and finish times to ensure you do not travel in high traffic hours. Face coverings must be worn while using public transport- As from 15th June this is now official guidance. • If workers have no option but to share transport, they should try to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people (up to a maximum of 6) at any one time. • Keep the windows open. • Travel side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them, where seating arrangements allow. • Maximise the distance between people. • Wear a face covering. • The vehicle should be cleaned between journeys, especially touch points, using gloves and standard cleaning products. • When using a motor vehicle to go to work travel on your own if possible. • Use a bike/walk is you site is near enough. • Whatever form of personal transport you use practice good hygiene and wipe down hard surfaces regularly.
Access to and from site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When going onto and off site remember to use the 2m SDR when going through the entrances/exits. Wait safely to one side if necessary. • Bio scanners and turnstiles will be disabled, or sanitisers will be available. Other forms of registering your attendance on site will be in place that does not require any physical contact. • If you need to leave site inform your supervisor by phone. • You must wash or clean your hands before entering or leaving the site. • Once you have put on your gloves avoid touching your face
Access around site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must only use the new designated access routes and obey instructions from the marshals who will monitor these routes to ensure SDR is maintained. • Use of the hoists/lifts will be restricted to material movements only or limited numbers of operatives. • Drivers should remain in their vehicles if the load will allow it and must wash or clean their hands & face before and after unloading/loading goods and materials. Avoid unnecessary contact with others. • Face coverings must be always worn unless engaging in work activities.
Canteen facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break times will be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times • Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser will be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by all when entering and leaving the area • Seating areas will be set up to enforce the social distancing SDR, please respect this. • You can bring your own lunch/snacks. If purchasing food, payments should be taken by contactless card whenever possible. Face coverings must be worn until you have seated at a table. • Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly e.g., kettles, refrigerators, and microwaves. • Do not congregate outside local shops. • You must clear your own waste into the bins provided, unnecessary touching of surfaces must be avoided, no spiting.

Task	Control Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables will be cleaned after each break time sitting (your site may have 2 sittings per break time) • Marshals/monitors will be in attendance during break times to enforce the SDR and to clean the surfaces after each sitting. • Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
<p>If a worker starts to display symptoms of COVID-19</p> <p>Symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat and headaches and loss of, or change to, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia). In severe cases difficulty in breathing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home and self-isolate. • Return home immediately avoiding public transport if possible and book a Covid-19 test. • Keep well away from others. • Avoid touching anything. • Cough/sneeze into tissue paper & discard of in a bin. • If you develop symptoms at work, book a test. The other members of your team will need to book a test if they start showing symptoms. Do not return to work until you are fully recovered. Then contact your line manager to arrange your return to work. • Inform line management immediately. <p>Benchmarks Site Manager who must inform the PC by phone or email as quickly as possible to allow a deep clean where appropriate.</p>
<p>Safe Starts and Tool Box Talks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The App will be used to record both the Safe Start and the TBT, this will be carried out in the open conforming to the SDR. • The supervisor giving the briefing will sign the screen on your behalf so as to avoid unnecessary contact.
<p>Working gangs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All gangs will be made up of 2 people although some tasks may require multiple gangs, with each gang practicing the SDR. • Non-essential work that requires close contact between workers will not be carried out. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working areas can be excluded and pre-loaded with materials on most sites. • A Big ben pulley or scaffolders' hoist can be used to lower/raise materials on certain scaffolds. • You must manage your work area/task. If others encroach into your SDR you must remove yourself to a safe place and inform your supervisor at once • Elements of the scaffold task may change after starting; remember that no work must be undertaken if it necessitates you working closer together than the 2m space that is required. • No skin-to-skin contacts to be made at any time. • If single use PPE is being used it must be discarded hygienically after use and prevent someone else using it (destroy after use and place in a bin) • Never share any PPE

Task	Control Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If dispersal or muster takes place in the event of an evacuation. The PC must formulate a plan and distribute it to all on site
Using toilet facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands before and after using the facilities. • Do not touch any door handles, locks or the toilet flush after cleaning your hands. • Ensure SDR is being followed. There will be a Marshal to restrict access to the toilets. • If this rule is being broken, wait until the toilets are less populated before using the facilities and then report this to your line manager. • Use paper towels to dry your hands or an air hand dryer. Do not use an air hand dryer to dry your face.
Scaffolders passing materials to each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The virus can be transmitted on objects or surfaces. • Follow the coughing and sneezing rule, contain the cough or sneeze in a tissue and dispose of it in a bin or if no tissue is available use the crook of your elbow to reduce spread. • Manual handling of materials should only be undertaken if the SDR can be maintained. Use mechanical means to load/unload lorries where ever possible. • Always wear gloves and clean them at the end of the shift. Additional gloves are being sent to all our working sites. • Plan how you are going to maintain the SDR when passing materials to each other. • All tools (impact wrenches, recip. saws, hammer drills etc.) to be cleaned using a minimum of a damp soapy cloth before and after use but do not get water in the tool. Alcohol based wipes to be used if a damp soapy cloth is not available.
Contact with site management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate by phone or with a 2m safe distance. • When writing out handovers wear disposable PVC gloves and do not share pens, alternatively wash hands thoroughly afterwards. • Leave paperwork to be signed by the PC and collect with gloves on when completed. • If emergency first aid is required, take precautions to minimise contact with the first aider. Surgical gloves to be worn by the first aider as well as FFP2 masks when treating an injured person. • Follow NASC guidance note SG19:17; A Guide to Formulating a Rescue Plan. Wear a FFP2 mask as a minimum if available. All involved in this operation will check themselves for symptoms of the virus and if symptoms appear follow the “If a worker starts to display symptoms of COVID-19” section on this RA.
Plant and machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one operative to operate plant and machinery on any shift. The controls of the plant or machinery must be cleaned down thoroughly after and before use, using a warm sappy cloth or wipes.
Going home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember to wash you face and hands before leaving. • If possible, take your PPE with you and wash it as appropriate.

Task	Control Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take extra care when you get home, change and wash before you have physical contact with your family
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Risk Assessment will be monitored for compliance by a site supervisor and any non-conformity will be reported to the BSL Site Manager. Also, this document will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

A safe system of work as follows:

Scaffolder A gains access to the next lift and positions himself at one end, near to the access ladder.

- Tubes and fittings are then transferred from below and stored on the lift.
- When placing materials, care must be taken not to overload a local area of the scaffold and to maintain a clear walkway in case of an emergency evacuation.
- Once Scaffolder A is clear of the access point, Scaffolder B can then gain access to this lift.
- Scaffolder B then receives the remaining materials from the labourer below.
- Scaffolder B then follows behind Scaffolder A, fitting transoms and boards (See Figure 1).
- Once Scaffolder A clear of the access point, Scaffolder B can then gain access to this lift.
- Scaffolder B then receives the remaining materials from the labourer below.
- Scaffolder B then follows behind Scaffolder A, fitting transoms and boards (See Figure 2).
- Work then progresses in this way along the lift, with both scaffolders maintaining at least one 2.0m segregation bay between them at all times.
- Bracing, ties, advanced guardrails and ladders may be fitted by either or both scaffolders as work progresses along the lift, ensuring that at least one segregation bay remains between them at all times.
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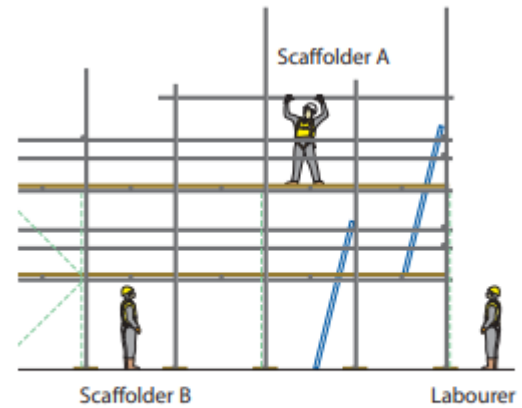


Figure 1

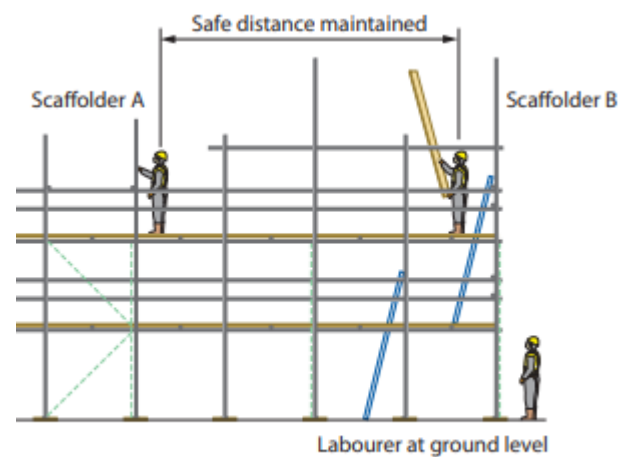


Figure 2

- Scaffolder B then follows behind Scaffolder A, fitting transoms and boards (See Figure 1).
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When the lift is complete, one scaffolder gains access to the lift above (scaffolders should take care not to pass each other in close proximity) and the process is then repeated to the full height of the scaffold. Other safe systems of work will be devised to suit different working situations and different types of scaffolds, but these will always strive to facilitate the strict requirements of maintaining 2.0m social distancing at all times. Where this is not possible a Special task risk assessment will identify suitable controls. Before any scaffold is dismantled, the work sequence will be planned to ensure that all necessary safety precautions and social distancing rules are adopted.

Finally

We would like to say thank you to all of you who have returned to work and adapted quickly to all the new processes in place. Our safety team is visiting sites to get feedback from you to find out how you are coping and to ensure that our customers have the necessary control measures in place so that you can continue to work safely. Do not forget your right to refuse to work if the conditions are not suitable!

If the site, you are on is not working safely or other trades around you are ignoring the rules then contact your line manager immediately so that we can take the necessary corrective action.

This will help our customers as well as ourselves.

Your signature of attendance will not be required as the distributor of this Toolbox Talk will record the persons present.