COVID-19 POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

We have set out the following guidance to assist staff working in our company to feel supported, informed and enable us to plan effectively, in the event of COVID-19 outbreak.

The company will take advice from the Local Authorities and through the world health organisation (WHO).

This simple guidance has been developed to raise awareness of the measures that may be employed to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 at work. It aims to:

- Allow our company to evaluate potential situations where there may be possible exposure to the COVID-19

- Assess the risks for the environment and to individuals by providing a matrix that can be used to consider the best ways of reducing the spread of COVID-19 in a work environment

- Describe the steps that can be taken to moderate any potential exposure to the COVID-19 in the projects

- Set out the measures that might be used to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 in the projects

- Ensure our staff are aware of the importance and value of personal protective equipment and their responsibilities regarding these

- Ensure our staff are aware of their responsibilities to maintain and promote a safe working environment

What Is Coronavirus (COVID-19) and how can I prepare?

ADVICE FOR EVERYONE OF US

Everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

You should only leave the house for 1 to 5 reasons:

- Shopping for necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.

- One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle – alone or with members of your household

- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person

- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home

- Your work is of a "key" nature and you are required to work or travel to assist in the delivery of key service

Everyone is susceptible. Because of this lack of immunity, the virus can:

- Infect more humans over a large geographical area

- Spread rapidly and efficiently from person to person

- Cause clinical illness in a proportion of those infected

Symptoms of COVID-19

The symptoms of COVID-19 will probably be similar to 'ordinary' flu but may be more severe. Seasonal flu usually affects your nose, throat, sinuses and airways.

The most significant symptoms are the sudden onset of:

- 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 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)

To protect others, do no go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

How can this be spread?

Any flu including COVID-19 is spread from person to person by close contact. Some examples of how this may spread are:

- Large droplets from coughing and/or sneezing, within a close distance

- Direct contact, by shaking or holding hands and through touching your own mouth and eyes etc. without washing your hands

- Through hand/face contact after touching a person or surfaces contaminated with the virus

- Through soft furnishings and surfaces where the virus may be contained for longer periods

Statement on Prevention and Control of Infection

As a company we are committed to reducing and minimising the transition of infection. It is a requirement that everyone has the responsibility to ensure they manage the housekeeping and personal hygiene effectively.

Although you cannot prevent the spread of the disease, you can take steps to control/reduce the spread by:

- Good hand washing practices

- Practicing good personal hygiene

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue while sneezing or coughing

- Individuals should not use cloth handkerchiefs or reuse tissues. This practice carries a risk of contaminating pockets or handbags which may then re-contaminate hands every time they go into those pockets or handbags

- Disposing of used tissues promptly and carefully (bag and bin them). Tissues should be disposed of in domestic waste they do not require any special treatment

- Washing hard surfaces (e.g. worktops, doorknobs) with a domestic cleaner regularly. Normal household detergent and water should be used to clean surfaces

- Avoiding unnecessary travel (if travelling, our members of staff will travel in separate vehicles)

- Avoiding crowds where possible

Company Contingency Planning

The company recognises the current health concerns and issues surrounding a pandemic and its potential impact on individuals and due to this we have introduced practical measures and systems that must be followed to ensure that potential risks are minimised/prevented and we have prepared a contingency plan to deal with any issues which may arise.

What should individuals do if they have symptoms or are ill?

If an individual does feel ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, while at work or at home, it is important that he or she does not simply carry on working and follows the guidelines below:

If individuals develop symptoms while at work, they should adhere to the following protocol:

- Report their symptoms immediately to their Line Manager or Supervisor

- The individual must be sent home

- If there are symptoms of coronavirus (a high temperature or a new, continuous cough), use the 111 coronavirus service to find out what to do

- The Line Manager should immediately contact a Director and implement the Contingency Plan.

Model for Risk Assessment

The following section provides details on the route of transmission/spread of the COVID-19 and the routes for reducing the potential for spread.

For the disease to spread within a community there must be a source of infection, a route by which the infection is transmitted, and individuals who are susceptible to the disease.

This is illustrated below, along with additional information.

SOURCE	TRANSMISSION →	RECIPIENT

The Source – the symptomatic individual

It is generally accepted that individuals should be considered potentially infectious from the time symptoms appear to the time their symptoms have completely disappeared, in general terms, the more severe the symptoms, the more infectious a person is likely to be.

Transmission – via droplets over a distance of under 2 metres or direct/indirect contact

COVID-19 is generally transmitted from person to person through close contact and over short distances – in the region of 2 metres. This pattern of transmission is known to be associated with spread by respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes, by direct contact with an infected person, or indirectly from objects or surfaces which have become covered with virus-infected secretions. Flu viruses are easily removed or destroyed by soap and water, normal household detergents or hand-rubs, (particularly alcohol-based).

The Recipient – the susceptible individual

In order to pass on the virus, individuals who are susceptible to the disease must be present, until an individual has acquired immunity, either through natural infection or through vaccination; they remain at risk of infection.

For a person to become infected with COVID-19, each one of three elements must be present:

- An individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19

- Who transmits the virus by direct or indirect contact

- A susceptible individual.

Mitigating Actions

Interventions that block all or part of the transmission route of a virus from a person with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to a susceptible person have the potential to stop the chain of infection.

These generally have one of the following objectives:

- Reduce transmission of infection from an individual(s) with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to a susceptible person, and/or

- Reduce the risk of susceptible people becoming infected

The measures that projects may want to consider in an effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 within the work environment are as follows:

Environmental	Actions can be taken within the environment to reduce the spread of the COVID-19
Organisational	Actions taken to modify behaviour and practice in the workplace to help reduce the spread of the COVID-19
Individual Behaviour	Actions taken at the level of the individual to restrict the spread of the COVID-19

Environmental

Signs have been prominently displayed within our company, which encourage staff, individuals and visitors to follow good practice such as:

- "How to wash their hands"

- The signs and symptoms of COVID-19

- The importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene at all times. Surfaces should be cleaned frequently with the usual cleaning materials

There is access to effective hand hygiene facilities for all staff, individuals and visitors. Staff have been issued with personal hand sanitizers, face masks and rubber gloves.

Organisational

It is our responsibility to raise awareness among staff of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the organisational and project contingency plans, to promote an environment in which staff who become unwell feel that they are given the correct advice and support to deal with this and we will consider alternatives to direct meetings, briefings etc. (e.g. phone, Whatsapp, email).

Individual behaviour

- Staff to adopt good hand hygiene practices and minimise touching the mouth, eyes and/or nose

- Adhere to policies, procedures and contingency plan in relation to COVID-19, infection control etc.

Risk Assessment Matrix

There is no single approach or measure that can be taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Prompt self-isolation together with proper respiratory etiquette and effective hand hygiene have been actively promoted, encouraged and applied. An approach where environmental, organisational and individual actions are combined and applied will help to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 within the workplace.

To provide a simple framework to help projects assess the practicality/practicability of possible mitigation measures, a matrix has been developed. This is illustrated below.

The matrix outlines ways of reducing the spread of the COVID-19 which combine the different levels of intervention and how they might be used to reduce individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 spreading infection, as well as reducing the risk that susceptible individuals might become infected.

	To reduce transmission from a symptomatic individual to healthy/susceptible people	To reduce the risk of healthy/susceptible people becoming infected
Environmental (action taken to alter the immediate environment)	• Encourage those who are ill to take advice from the 111 Coronavirus service • Encourage the use of the postal system, telephone and internet to communicate and stay in contact • Ensure, wherever possible, that there are physical barriers between the individual and the member of staff	• Easy access to hand hygiene facilities • Increase environmental cleaning – normal cleaning agents can be used to clean those surfaces frequently touched by hands • Provide waste bins for contaminated tissues
Organisational (measures taken to modify the organisation/pattern of project daily life)	• Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to promote early recognition • Be aware of organisational procedures for dealing with individuals with symptoms consistent with flu • Staff have been advised to self-isolate and stay at home if they develop COVID-19 symptoms • This would have to be balanced against other considerations such as staff availability or risk	• Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of flu to promote early recognition • Consider the feasibility of limiting, restricting or controlling the number visitors, contractors, agency visits to the project or the individuals we support in order to decrease social interactions and increase social distancing
Individual (action taken at the level of the individual to modify behaviour)	• This would have to be balanced against other considerations such as staff availability or risk	• Encourage staff to clean their hands frequently and properly and not to touch their mouth, eyes and/or nose unless they have cleaned their hands.

Self-isolation if you or someone you live with has symptoms

Self-isolation helps stop coronavirus spreading

Do not leave your home if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who does.
This is called self-isolation.

When you are self-isolating, you must:

- Not leave your home for any reason, other than to exercise once a day – but stay at least 2 metres (3steps) away from other people

- Not go out to buy food or collect medicine – order them by phone or online, or ask someone else to drop them off at your home

- Not have visitors, such as friends and family, in your home

- You can use your garden, if you have one

Company Staffing Levels and Arrangements

In the event of staff being absent from work due to the COVID-19, the company has set out the following targets, to ensure we continue to operate effectively, and our services continue to function, despite possibility of some services being reduced. All admin work can be undertaken from home where they feel well enough and this has been agreed by their Line Manager. A loss of any members of staff (groundworkers) will cause direct client impact and to prevent the impact on the client, members of the management team will replace the ground workers affected as each member of the management team has the necessary qualifications to undertake these activities.

All staff absences in relation to the COVID-19 should immediately be reported to the Line Manager and the above should be implemented.

Staff Holidays

Annual leave already authorised will be honoured where possible, although where this will adversely affect service delivery you may be asked to cancel leave.

Guidance on Hand Hygiene

Wet
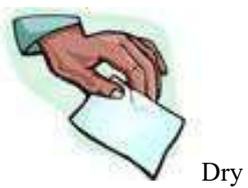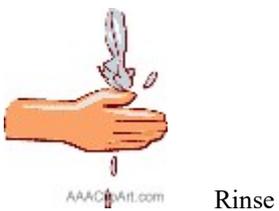
Stop germs spreading.

The power is in your hands.

Soap

Have you washed your germs away?

Wash your hands?

Wash

Rinse

Dry

Checklists

To reduce transmission from an individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to healthy/susceptible people.

Environmental issues to consider	Tick when complete ☑
Use prominently displayed signs reminding people of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and measures to be adopted.	
Clean surfaces frequently with the usual cleaning materials.	
Where practicable, make effective use of physical barriers to help restrict close interaction and direct contact with potentially ill service users" or visitors.	
Consider improving access to hand hygiene facilities, e.g. making hand rubs available.	
Minimise the number of soft furnishings and other objects that could potentially become contaminated and are difficult to clean.	
Organisational issues to consider	
Raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and the need for an individual with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 to self-isolate.	
Consider how best to manage people with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in the workplace.	
Consider alternatives to direct meetings, visits, briefings (e.g. phone, whatsapp, email).	
Direct contact should be avoided and a distance of more than two metres should be kept between staff and individuals.	
Individual issues to consider	
Encourage proper hand hygiene.	
Encourage proper respiratory hygiene.	
Minimise interactions with people.	

To prevent the risk of healthy/susceptible people becoming infected.

Environmental issues to consider	Tick when completed ☑
Assess access to hand hygiene facilities.	
Clean surfaces frequently touched by hands.	
Organisational issues to consider	
Raise awareness of the importance of respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.	
Consider the practicability of the effective use of social distancing within work environments.	
Cancel face-to-face meetings and only undertake essential travel.	
Encourage the use of email or telephone communication.	
Consider the use of home working for those staff for whom this would be a practical option.	
Identify individuals who may be at particular risk of the adverse effects of COVID-19 and deploy to areas where contacts are minimal.	
Individual issues to consider	
Identify individuals who may be at particular risk of the adverse effects of COVID-19 and deploy to areas where contacts are minimal.	
Increase social distancing. (keep at least 2 metres apart)	
Avoid contact with individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19	

Signed	**Ray Brandon**
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