



Issued on behalf of the Construction  
Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum

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# Work to be carried out in commercial properties

OPERATING PROCEDURES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Scottish Construction Coronavirus (CICV) Forum includes representatives from the following bodies:

- Association for Consultancy and Engineering (ACE)
- Association for Project Safety (APS)
- British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA)
- Builders Merchants Federation (BMF)
- Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
- Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- Chartered Institution of Civil Engineering Surveyors (CICES)
- Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA Scotland)
- Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA)
- DHF
- Electrical Distributors' Association (EDA)
- Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
- Finishes and Interiors Sector (FIS)
- Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF)
- Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA)
- National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC)
- Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Scaffolding Association
- Scottish Building Federation (SBF)
- Scottish Contractors Group
- Scottish Plant Owners Association (SPOA)
- Single Ply Roofing Association (SPRA)
- SELECT
- SNIPEF
- Stone Federation (GB)

The Forum was set up to bring together the main construction trade and professional bodies to gather intelligence, share advice and speak directly with the Scottish Government on issues affecting members in the current crisis.

We are now in regular contact with the Scottish Government, making them aware of industry concerns and offering guidance and support. There is still an overriding demand for clarity and relevant information, which is why the Forum has updated this guidance for businesses operating in Scotland.

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## WHAT WORK SHOULD THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SCOTLAND UNDERTAKE?

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Since June 2020, construction workers have been able to return to work. From 5 January 2021, mainland Scotland moved from Level 4 to a temporary lockdown. On 19 January, it was decided to extend the current restrictions, which will now remain in place across mainland Scotland and some island communities until at least the middle of February.

Therefore, the Forum recommends that:

1. Construction sites can continue to operate within the current operating procedures and current legislation.
2. In mainland Scotland, tradespeople should only go into a house to carry out or deliver essential work or services. On Wednesday 13 January, the First Minister confirmed that this current guidance would become law from Saturday 16 January.
3. Only emergency repair and maintenance work essential to safety is undertaken until notified otherwise by the Scottish Government.

Examples include:

- Emergency repairs to heating and plumbing and ventilation systems
- Maintenance works required to maintain statutory compliance
- Electrical and fire and security systems
- Roof and building fabric repairs
- Attending to lift breakdowns and releasing trapped users
- Telecom repairs etc.

Please refer to your own trade association or federation for further examples of industry-specific guidance.

In light of the increased transmission rate of the new strain of COVID-19, all businesses are advised to refer to the updated construction sector guidance on safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**We understand that the Scottish Government will be conducting reviews of the current lockdown measures on a regular basis. We will provide updates to this guidance as we receive further updates or information.**

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## GUIDANCE

The guidance on the following pages has been introduced to offer some form of clarity to the industry as we continue to work in the most unusual of times.

Individual business should make their own judgment on the work being completed and, in doing so, must take all reasonable steps as detailed by the Scottish Government to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.

We have produced two guides - one for those working in domestic properties (homes) and those who may work in commercial premises, e.g. nursing homes, medical centres, etc. Please note these premises may issue their own advice and this must be taken into account as well.

It is not 'business as usual' for our industry and we must all play our part to protect our staff, our customers and the wider population from the spread of this terrible virus.

The advice is subject to change without notice depending on decisions taken by the Scottish or UK Governments and updated information will be issued as required.

For more information or guidance please keep visiting your trade or professional body's website.

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## WORK CARRIED OUT IN COMMERCIAL PREMISES

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- It will be necessary to undertake some work in commercial properties especially in areas around emergency repair and maintenance work.
- When such work is required, businesses should speak with the relevant person and ensure that they share any specific site guidance about the work to be undertaken and especially the health and safety considerations for those undertaking the work and those who may be occupying the premises.
- Tradespeople carrying out emergency repairs and maintenance can continue to carry out work, provided that the tradesperson is well and has no symptoms.
- The risks to an individual at work are dependent on the work they are completing and the environment that the work is completed in. A COVID-19 risk assessment should be completed and include, but not be limited to, controls for social distancing, ventilation, travel and access to hygiene facilities.
- When in enclosed spaces a suitable and sufficient face covering should be worn.
- It is important to ensure that government guidelines, including maintaining a 2m distance from any occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety:



[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

- In those premises where individuals may be isolating or where an individual is being shielded, e.g nursing homes etc, work should only be carried out **to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the occupants, such as emergency plumbing, heating or electrical repairs**, and where the tradesperson is willing to do so. In such cases, Health Protection Scotland or Public Health England can provide advice to tradespeople and households.
- No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has Coronavirus symptoms, however mild.
- In areas that may present a greater risk of COVID-19 transmission or infection, trades are advised to communicate with the organisation before the visit to identify any specific controls that may be required.

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## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

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- We have prepared a letter which you should send to your customer before you start work explaining how they and your operative will be protected. A copy is available here:



[www.bit.ly/CICV\\_commercial\\_letter](http://www.bit.ly/CICV_commercial_letter)

- This letter should be sent in advance, ideally via email and confirmation of receipt should be given by the customer before work commences. If it isn't possible to use email then a hard copy of the letter should be given to the customer.
- When discussing a visit to a site or premises, ask if any residents or staff in a workplace are self-isolating, displaying any symptoms of COVID19, and/or have received a positive diagnosis.
- Where the occupants are not self-isolating, displaying any symptoms, and have not been diagnosed with COVID-19, trades may attend for emergency situations, while exercising general best practise in line with the latest Scottish Government guidance:



<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-general-guidance-for-safer-workplaces/pages/work-in-other-peoples-homes-faq/>

- Government guidance is continually evolving, but be especially vigilant of undertaking work for those persons currently identified as most at risk, such as the over-70s, and/or with underlying health issues.
- As well as protecting yourself, and your customers, you should also consider the welfare of your operatives and colleagues.

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## PRACTICAL STEPS WHEN WORKING IN THE FIELD

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- On the day of the work, call ahead to your customer to ask if they or any occupants have signs of the virus, have been diagnosed, or are self-isolating, and to check that they are comfortable with your visit to take place.
- Explain to your customers what you will be doing, and why, and that you will need to maintain a safe distance from them (2m or six steps away is current government advice), including when waiting for the customer to open the door.
- Do not shake hands with the customer or anyone else in the building.
- Ask if all the occupants can stay in another room, away from the work area(s) while the work proceeds. With permission, ventilate the work area where appropriate, e.g. by opening a window.
- Wear a suitable and sufficient face covering.
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds at the start of the job and after, and also during the work. It is recommended that you carry your own hand towel with your equipment. Please ensure that you wash/replace this hand towel with your equipment at the end of each day or shift.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wear suitable work gloves.
- If you or your operative feels unsafe or at risk at any point, undertake a personal risk assessment and leave the premises if necessary. You can always re-plan for a future date if appropriate, after ensuring everything is made safe.
- If a customer/engineer signature is usually required by the type of work you undertake, consider how it may be avoided, or if possible, send an electronic copy at a later date.



**Please note: Use and/or sharing of pens, tablets or mobile phones may pose a risk of contamination or infection.**



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## WHAT TO DO BEFORE STARTING WORK AND AFTER WORK IS COMPLETED

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- Wipe down any operational rubber gloves, tools and instruments before and after any work.
- Remove and place into a plastic bag any wipes, disposable gloves and overalls used, while trying not to cross-contaminate onto existing clothes or persons.
- Do not touch your face.
- Ensure you then clean/wash your hands, and where possible/appropriate any reusable PPE (e.g. safety glasses), using soap and water, or use suitable hand sanitizer on hands before moving to your next job.
- At the end of each day and following the appropriate local waste regulations dispose of any bagged waste in line with any existing business process and/or government guidance.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

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Please note, this list has been prepared to offer some form of guidance and it is not exhaustive.

It is vital that every job, and potential risk, is judged on its own merits and that the key considerations around health and welfare are the primary concerns for any work you undertake.

Further advice and information will be available from your trade or professional body.

**Important notice:** This document has been prepared by way of guidance and anyone who proposes to use it should consider the details based on their businesses obligations and if necessary, take independent advice either from their own trade or professional body or legal advisors. This will of course include recognition of all relevant health and safety legislation. Again, your trade or professional body will be able to assist with this.

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## Current members of the Construction Industry Coronavirus (CICV) Forum:

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- Single Ply Roofing Association (SPRA)
- SELECT
- SNIPEF
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### Further information



[www.cicvforum.co.uk](http://www.cicvforum.co.uk)



[info@cicvforum.co.uk](mailto:info@cicvforum.co.uk)

