



## Post-coronavirus start-up guidance: Covid-19 service sector operations

Some maintenance, repair, servicing and engineering inspection businesses have been operating a limited service for essential users, or responding to critical or emergency call-outs, whilst others will have ceased operations for all or part of the lockdown period.

This guidance has been produced to assist organisations that operate in the service sectors and will face challenges in respect of resuming normal operational activities in the post-lockdown period.

Many businesses, buildings, plant and equipment serviced by this industry will have been shutdown since mid-March, in some cases at very short notice, and where it may not have been possible to follow OEM controlled shutdown steps. This may undoubtedly create additional problems, all of which need to be assessed from a post Covid-19 perspective before any work or operations can commence safely. As a first step, no plant or equipment should be operated unless it has first been inspected, and pre-start up commissioning checks have been carried out.

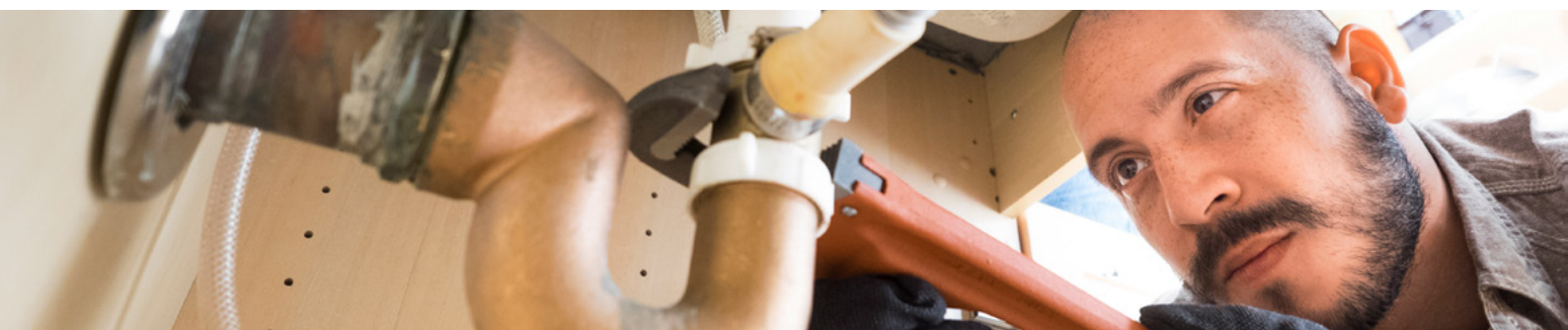
**These guidelines do not override any existing policy conditions.**

**The fact that a business is deemed essential, or is permitted to operate, does not mean its legal obligations are in any way relaxed or reduced. Indeed, in the present climate the duties owed to employees and others are enhanced. All activities must only be undertaken in line with the current guidance issued by HM Government.**

All applicable health & safety legislation and regulations remain fully in force, including but not limited to:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER).
- Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005.
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER).
- Pressure Equipment (Testing) Regulations 2016.
- Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000.
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989.
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016.
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations 2002.

First and foremost, customer, maintenance and service engineers, and employee safety are paramount.





# Coronavirus Response

## Risk management measures

**Activities:** It is important that a review of your working activities is undertaken before restarting any work, as this will form part of your Covid-19 Compliance risk assessment.

You must carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, as it will not be appropriate to carry out activities as you normally would. You will need to carefully review standard working practices to ensure you can comply with new third party visit rules and that you can meet the physical distancing and hygiene requirements needed to protect employees. You may need to contact your customers in advance of any premises visit by your service engineer, to understand their revised procedures or PPE for your employees before they attend the third-party premises. Please see the latest Government and HSE advice for updates on appropriate precautions to be taken.

**Please remember that if some activities cannot be carried out safely, they should not be undertaken at all.**

You must reinduct/train your employees to ensure that they understand new risk assessments and restrictions, new rules and altered arrangements for working and travelling to workplaces. You may need to operate out of hours and/or, introduce staggered shifts and working patterns to manage safely the social distancing elements of the Covid-19 guidelines.

Please click on the headings below for links to further information:

[HSE Coronavirus information](#)

[HSE Social Distancing Guidelines](#)

[Working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[HSE Working safely during Coronavirus](#)

[Sector Specific Business and Trade Association Guidance](#)

## Consultation

Employers must consult with employees and trade unions about the return to the workplace. In the meantime staff should continue to work from home if they can.

Employers should keep up to date with the latest government guidance to help them plan.

When planning to return to the workplace, employers must:

- Consult with staff and employee representatives, including any trade union representatives and health and safety officials.
- Consider the risks of anyone being harmed in the workplace and carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Make the workplace as safe as possible for staff, customers and other visitors.

Some employees may be anxious about their safety when returning to the workplace. Employers and employees should talk about any concerns and try to resolve them together. It can also help to signpost staff to any health and wellbeing support that is available, for example occupational health or mental health services. More advice is available via this link: [Mental Health Support Covid 19](#).



# Coronavirus Response

## PPE

You must ensure that you have adequate supplies of PPE. Some items of PPE are in very short supply, particularly FFP masks and certain types of gloves – employees must not be put at risk because there is no PPE to wear for hazards in the workplace. Where service vehicles are used you should ensure that only appropriate PPE is provided in the vehicle, and any PPE which is the wrong type, or has an expired “use by” date, must be removed. Activities must not be undertaken if there is no PPE available for a task.

Remember that for Covid-19 risks, PPE is a last resort and not the first option. PPE should be used where social distancing is not possible, rather than as an alternative to social distancing.

## Risk management

You must:

- Prepare a Covid-19 risk assessment. This should be prepared in consultation with your employees and/or their representatives. Once prepared it should be shared with the workforce. If you have more than 50 employees it should be published on your website.
- Update your other risk assessments and working procedures to take account of Covid-19. This should include the requirement to undertake a dynamic risk assessment of the specific location being visited, prior to undertaking the work.
- Ensure that your employees have had training refreshed in respect of Covid-19 for risk assessments and working procedures.
- Confirm to employees and customers that you have, and can supply/provide, the correct PPE where this is required for all work-related activities. As employees may be visiting any number of different locations PPE, where possible, must be disposable between visits to locations to ensure that potential cross contamination does not occur from site to site. Waste PPE should be double bagged and may have to be stored in the service vehicle until the end of the shift. More importantly, training in the correct fitting, use and removal of PPE is paramount. Further information has been published by the Government regarding waste PPE items this can be found [here](#).
- Ensure that all your employees are symptom-free and have not been in contact within the last 14 days with someone who has had, or is suspected to have had, Covid-19, or someone who has been required to self-isolate with suspected Covid-19.
- In addition, anyone who is classed as a vulnerable person, through age, ill health condition, pregnancy, or who is a carer for someone who is vulnerable, should remain away from work, in line with HM Government current advice.
- Inform your insurer that you are returning to an operational status, and following specific guidance issued by HM Government and the HSE in respect of Covid-19.
- Confirm that all relevant insurance policies areas still in force and the limits of indemnity remain as before the crisis.







# Coronavirus Response

## Document the following:

- **Assess:** review all areas of work activity, look for contact points between employees and others, such as customers and any members of the public and consider/re-assess if these can be managed within the current social distancing guidelines. Update your risk assessments to reflect any changes and ensure your employees are made aware of the changes.
- **Train and inform:** communicate with your employees about what the new changes may mean, ensuring that employees fully understand and above all document and record all training and information going forward.
- **Clean:** review welfare arrangements and facilities provided – can social distancing be achieved in washrooms and dry canteen facilities under your control? As most service engineers and technicians will be visiting third party premises, consider carefully how this needs to be managed. In all cases you must liaise/co-operate with your client before the engineer visits so that you can inform your employee of new hygiene procedures and rules before they arrive at the third-party location. The cleaning frequency and removal of waste from service vehicles must be increased to avoid accumulation of waste and ensure cleanliness is maintained.
- All actions, systems and procedures must be documented – you may be required to produce evidence of compliance to a regulator.

## Pre-visit guidance steps

There is a need to define clearly the steps required to resume normal and routine operations during the post Covid-19 period.

**Plan** your operations, what do you need to do? Can this be done in isolation without incurring or putting employees at further risk through lone working that increases the risk to their personal safety? Understand that you may not be able to visit locations such as care homes and hospitals, or other areas where vulnerable persons are present. Review and establish whether it is possible to conduct remote maintenance checks where the appropriate monitoring technology permits in place of a physical visit would normally take place (e.g. for intruder alarm systems, remote interrogation of building management systems etc.).

**Assess** what needs to be done pre-visit? Communicate with your clients, ask what their practices, procedures and policies are in respect of access to plant, equipment, buildings etc. What are their new hygiene practices and security restrictions? You will have to make declarations to clients about Covid-19. i.e. that visiting personnel have not been in touch with anyone or been self-isolating.

**Train** your employees in your new Policies and Practices – discuss with them the standard procedures for key clients and organisations that you normally work for – it is essential that you communicate these and make sure they understand them before visiting.

**Clean** – make sure your vehicles, tools, PPE, plant and equipment, as well as core base facilities, are cleaned and sanitised thoroughly. This will need to be done between visits to premises and needs to be documented by maintaining a log.



# Coronavirus Response

**Monitor** what's going on – are new policies working? Do risk assessments need further revision? Seek feedback from service personnel to ensure that concerns are addressed, and revisions are made where appropriate.

**Review** – step back and review all aspects of work related-activities, if anything has changed has this been communicated, and if so, does more training need to be carried out? Do internal processes need further change and amendment?

## Example maintenance, repair, servicing and engineering inspection businesses

The following is an example list of business activities this guidance relates to:

- Fire alarm engineers
- Security including intruder alarms
- Building surveyors
- Motor vehicle engineers
- HVAC
- Electricians
- Gas engineers
- Statutory inspection engineers
- Lift engineers
- Water treatment technicians
- Plumbers
- Building services contractors
  - » Vending technicians
  - » Cleaning
  - » Waste
  - » Catering
  - » Office equipment and supplies





# Coronavirus Response

## Vehicles

You are no doubt aware that there has been a relaxation of certain legislation which is primarily there to ensure the safety of all road users – drivers' hours and MOT's to name but two. The relaxation does not mean safety can be ignored, so more frequent vehicle checks and ensuring vehicles are always legally road worthy is paramount. Many police forces have found an increase in the amount of speeding and a marked increase in the speeds being driven at. If the speed being driven at exceeds the speed limit by 50% or more, courts have the power to impose an immediate period of disqualification. It may be worth carrying out either random licence checks, or a complete check of all drivers driving on business. This must be through the DVLA to ensure accurate data is used.

Your vehicles may have been laid up, used normally or used far more. For those that have been laid up, regular checks should still be carried out. You should check for anything left in the vehicle which would be an issue if it is left untouched for any period, for example old cups, clothing and food containers. It will be very important to ensure vehicles that have been laid up are in full working order prior to being used on the road once again. Also ensure that you record these checks in detail. Your drivers may well have been away from their driving tasks for several weeks, but for all your driving staff, there is a question set at the end of this document to check their state of mind and skill, prior to them resuming driving or continuing driving within the standard driving limits.

- While MOTs due from the 30/03/2020 have been given a 6-month extension, it is still important that any vehicles being used on the road are up to safety standards and road legal. You need to encourage your drivers to carry out regular vehicle checks – vehicles should still be started up and run for short periods of time at regular intervals.
- Your drivers should carry out checks of tyres, as tyres that have not been used can crack or deflate, which will cause issues if not checked and repaired as required. If tyres would have been replaced at the next MOT, they may well have developed defects or be below the legal tread depth by the time the MOT is carried out.
- Depending on the type of braking system, checks need to be made to ensure that rusty discs have not formed, and brake lining or pads have not rusted onto discs or brake drums, which will cause issues when moving off and braking normally.
- Fluid levels – all fluid levels need to be checked, especially engine/transmission oil, engine coolant and washer fluid.
- Load security – many vehicles will be fitted out with tools, plant and additional equipment – it is important that this equipment is always secured and any plant such as compressors, ladders, scaffold equipment are checked and, where applicable, have a valid test and examination certificate.

The above items are examples of the checks needed to ensure your drivers are carrying out and require attention prior to driving in any event, but more so if the vehicle has not been used for some time. Always check the manufacturers handbook for the checks to be made for your vehicle type.

There is a question set below to check the drivers state of mind and skill prior to them resuming driving or continuing driving within the standard driving limits.





# Coronavirus Response

## Driver return to driving question set:

1. Have you driven during the current restrictions?
  - a. Yes – normally
  - b. Yes – very little
  - c. No not at all
2. Do you feel competent to drive normally for business?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Do you require any support prior to driving?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Have you maintained your vehicle during this period, and can you confirm it is roadworthy and legal to drive?

It is important to assess your driver's ability to drive in normal circumstances, and especially prior to returning to driving following a period of non-driving. Also consider those that have been driving and are used to less vehicles and quiet roads, reminding them that this will not be the case going forward. If there are any issues with drivers mental or physical abilities to drive, please refer to your normal AXA contact for further assistance.

