



Department for Transport

The Department for Transport would like to thank you for your organisation's concerted efforts in recent weeks and to update you on the Department for Transport's approach to managing construction as part of the Government's COVID-19 response. This could also include street and road works, where people are working on-site.

Current Government and industry guidance:

The Government's current policy is that construction activity should continue where it can be undertaken in accordance with the Public Health England and industry guidance.

The further social distancing restrictions announced on Monday 23 March are aimed at people staying at home where possible. Accordingly, we would expect this to be taking place for any work that can be completed remotely. However, these measures are not designed to prevent people who must travel to work from doing so and there is a secondary objective to sustain the economy where it is possible to do so whilst keeping people safe. Travel is not currently restricted to essential workers and is permitted for others where necessary for work including construction workers operating on site. The Government has published updated guidance on these restrictions and what is means for those involved in construction; the guidance can be found here:

<https://www.businesssupport.gov.uk/business-closures-and-stay-at-home-faqs/>

The construction industry has also developed and issued specific Site Operating Procedures designed to manage risk in continuing to operate construction sites. These have been reviewed by Public Health England and you should ensure that your suppliers are aware and considering their application: <https://builduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Site-Operating-Procedures-23-March-2020.pdf>.

Decisions on whether to continue to operate sites should be taken locally by you and your suppliers, considering the safety of workers and the public and the feasibility of complying with the PHE and industry guidance on safe working. What is right for one site may not be right for another and it is important that local judgement applies unless and until any further restrictions are applied in support of the overall health strategy. The overriding priority is the safety of the public and workers.

This approach is not supported by some who view it as unnecessarily increasing the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 but that is not currently the considered position of the Government.

Contingency planning:

It is possible that the Government's policy on continuing construction may change further based on the overall COVID-19 response strategy. Accordingly, you should begin to identify which construction works would be essential to continue if the guidance were to tighten further. That might include: works necessary to sustain critical services; works to support COVID-19 handling; and works necessary to make sites safe and secure that are otherwise ceasing.

Bringing works forward:

There may be opportunities to use this period of reduced public usage to advance maintenance and repair works if it is safe and practical to do so.



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Financial support to the supply chain:

We recognise fully that the current situation has precipitated much uncertainty in the construction sector. HM Treasury and the Bank of England have recently announced financial support schemes but it is clear that this may not be accessible or suitable for all companies within the supply chain.

Whilst at this stage we cannot provide any information beyond that already announced by the Chancellor, we understand that further schemes are being considered.

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