



# CORONAVIRUS -19

## SAFE WORKING PROTOCOL

## SAWMILL & WOOD PANEL INDUSTRIES

17/06/2020

The health, safety and well-being of you and your colleagues is a key priority to our Industry(s). Our resilient workforce is so important to enable us to maintain our duties to support essential businesses and front-line services in the fight against Covid-19. We are taking every step to protect employee welfare and business operations, so we can continue to trade and sustain as many jobs as possible. We are committed to ensure control measures are in place across the forestry, Wood & Wood based panel manufacturing industries to ensure your health, safety and wellbeing, and wish you and your families well during the challenging time.

The Scottish & UK Government(s) have highlighted the importance of our industries to ensure the supply of essential goods at this critical time. The entire UK industry relies on pallets and wooden packaging for transportation of food supply, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, for those that need it the most.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, our key partnerships in both the sawmill and WPIF re-affirm our position as a critical supply chain partners with strong services supporting our customers who provide food supplies and medical equipment to frontline staff, patients and communities right cross the UK.

In addition, supplying services into producing energy and pellet products, which are used to heat our hospitals and nursing homes in the UK many of which have no other back up heat source.

### Together, we are fighting Covid-19



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## **1. Responsible Actions during COVID-19**

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These are exceptional circumstances and the industry must comply with the latest Government advice on Coronavirus at all times.

Sawmill and Panel Board Mill work sites operating during the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic must ensure they are protecting their workforce and minimising the risk of spread of infection.

This guidance is intended to deliver a set of consistent measures on sites of all sizes in line with the Government's recommendations on social distancing.

Sawmills have a fast-moving dynamic environment and can be dangerous places. Apart from the obvious physical dangers, occupational health risk also needs controlling. Covid-19 has added a requirement for a specific risk assessment to be considered in the many Sawmill activities.

Generally, most Sawmill work sites are large scale where social distancing, keeping more than 2 meters apart, will not be a problem.

The health and safety requirements of any Sawmill activity must not be compromised at this time. If an activity cannot be undertaken safely due to a lack of suitably qualified personnel being available or social distancing being implemented, it should not take place.

We are aware that emergency services are also under greater pressure and may not be in a position to respond as quickly as usual.

Managers and supervisors should remind the workforce at every opportunity of the Covid-19 Site Safety Operating Procedures which are aimed at protecting them, their colleagues, their families and the UK population.

## **2. Business Risk Management Strategy**

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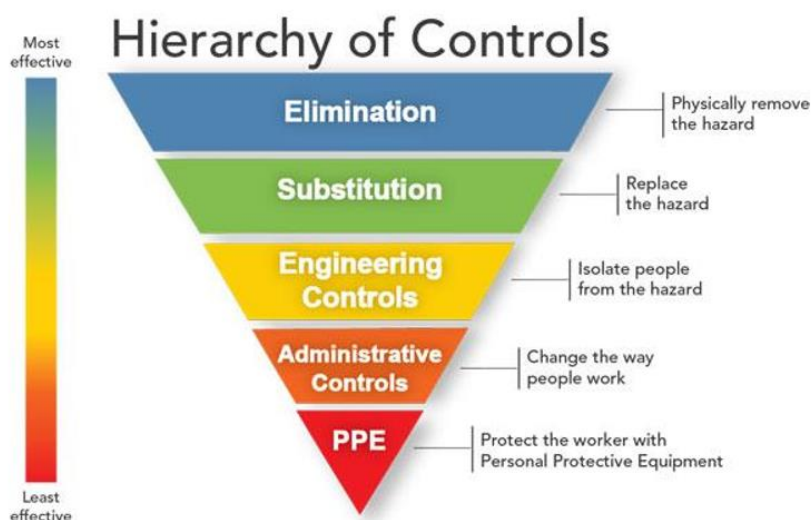
The two biggest responsibilities on our Industries shoulders are making sure our workplace is COVID-secure and our legal duty to perform a COVID-19 specific risk assessment is carried out.

The government has said that businesses should make every reasonable effort to enable homeworking as a first option in the fight against COVID-19. However, for some businesses that simply isn't possible – those in construction and manufacturing, for example have to carry out a COVID-19-specific risk assessment to establish what safety measures are

already in place and what needs to be put in place before your people start returning to the workplace.

Businesses within the Forestry, Wood & Wood panel industry **MUST** ensure:

1. A suitable and sufficient assessment of risk is carried out (and reviewed on a regular basis) against current government COVID-19 guidance and site operating processes, taking into account:
  - How will you manage social distancing in the workplace?
    - How can people move around the building while staying two metres apart at all times?
  - What safe hygiene practices will you put in place?
    - Do you need to deep clean your workplace before people return?
    - Will you ask employees to clean down their workstations before and after work?
    - Think about installing additional handwashing stations and hand sanitiser.
  - Can you stagger start and finish times?
    - Can you move shift patterns around so there aren't as many people in the workplace at once?
  - Will you need to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) such as facemasks as a control for your workplace?
  - How can you manage visitors to the premises?
2. Businesses should ENSURE the risk assessment is communicated to all staff members within the business and periodic reviews are carried out as and when required or in the event of a business, government guidance change.
3. Where social distancing measures cannot be met then a hierarchy of control should be implemented to reduce the risk of exposure:



### **3. Compliance with Health & Safety Law**

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- I. The Covid-19 Regulations do not change health and safety law. Employers and self-employed persons remain subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and to all applicable health and safety law and regulations.
- II. Employers must continue to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees; and that employers and self-employed persons must ensure that they go about all their work and business to ensure that persons they don't employ are not exposed to health and safety risks.
- III. Employers remain under a duty to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to employees and others to identify the control measures needed to eliminate the risks, failing which they must reduce the risks to the lowest level.
- IV. Coronavirus is one of those risks and what follows is the factors to help our Industry in complying with their health and safety duties and responsibilities so far as coronavirus risks are concerned.

### **4. Physical / Social Distancing**

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If it is not possible for the work to be done at home, every effort must be made to implement social distancing requirements, as follows:

- I. Crowding in the workplace can and must be avoided.
- II. All persons working in or outside the workplace must be at least 2 metres apart from the nearest person, where possible.
- III. In areas that may become crowded (e.g. where queues may form such as clocking station) floor markings should be used to facilitate 2 metre distancing.
- IV. Use floor markings in potential 'bottleneck' areas such as building entrances/exits, canteens, restrooms and communal break areas.
- V. Where possible create one-way traffic systems to help minimise two-way flow of personnel transiting site.
- VI. Workers who cannot be kept 2 metres apart must work side by side or facing away from each other.
- VII. Face to face/close contact is only permissible where it is totally unavoidable and must be limited to 15 minutes maximum.

- VIII. Team work is only allowed where it is either unavoidable or where it can be used to reduce risk, and teams should be kept as small as possible. Use 'cohorting' (keeping the same teams together) so that any unavoidable contact is always between the same persons.
- IX. Use shift-working or staggering work times to maintain social distancing. Introduce shift working to alternate when people are on the premises and away from them.
- X. For any activity where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full and the activity is not crucial to the operation of the business, stop the activity.
- XI. For any activity where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full and the activity is crucial to the operation of the business, take all possible mitigating actions to reduce the risk of staff transmitting the virus, including face coverings. In terms of PPE, the latest UK guidance is:
  - a. Where you are already using PPE in your work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks, you should continue to do so.
  - b. Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of PPE to protect against COVID-19.
  - c. PPE for protection against coronavirus is generally only required for certain healthcare activities. In a non-clinical setting, there is no need to provide different PPE than you would normally have provided before the outbreak started. Further information can be found here - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/non-healthcare/index.htm>)
- XII. Do not allow any employees in a vulnerable group to do any activity where social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.
- XIII. Ensure any employees in an extremely vulnerable group, and who must be shielded, stay at home.

## 5. Site Management Guidelines

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### Self -Isolation

The business must be aware of the "self-isolation" requirements.

At the first and earliest instance Employees who begin to show signs of COVID related symptoms should inform their employer as soon as possible. This may either be through Line supervision or management. In the event the employee becomes unwell out with working hours a phone call should be made to the relevant employee member.

Staff or workers who have symptoms of coronavirus must not be allowed in the workplace and must be instructed not to travel to work.

Staff or workers who live with anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus must not be allowed in the workplace and instructed to stay at home and not to travel to work.

- I. A person who is self-isolating must not leave your home for any reason and must not have visitors, such as friends and family, in the home.
- II. If the person has coronavirus symptoms, they must self-isolate for 7 days.



- III. After 7 days they can stop self-isolating as long as they don't have a high temperature or if they just have a cough. They must carry on self-isolating for as long as they have a high temperature.
- IV. If they live with someone who has symptoms, they must self-isolate for 14 days from the day their symptoms started. If more than 1 person they live with has symptoms, they must self-isolate for 14 days from the day the first person started having symptoms.
- V. If they get symptoms, they have to self-isolate for 7 days from when the symptoms start, even if that means self-isolating for longer than 14 days.
- VI. If they do not get symptoms, they can end their self-isolation after 14 days.

## Procedure if someone falls ill

Having suitable sickness procedures is critical. As a minimum these must comprise the following:

- I. The business must be able to recognise the symptoms of coronavirus (a new continuous cough and/or high temperature, loss of taste and smell).
- II. It must not allow anyone to come to work if they are unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature.
- III. If a member of staff or worker lives in a household where someone else has coronavirus symptoms they must stay at home.
- IV. If the symptoms come on at work instruct the affected person to go swiftly and directly home and to stay there for 7 days.
- V. Ensure managers and supervisors know what the symptoms are and how to spot them.
- VI. Managers and supervisors must be fully instructed on the procedures that apply where someone in the workplace is potentially infected, including the action they must take and the instruction and information they must give to affected workers.
- VII. Don't insist on staff providing doctors' certificates, NHS 111 isolation notes, or similar unless you have sufficiently good reasons for insisting on them.
- VIII. Any member of staff who assists someone who becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, does not need to be sent home unless they too develop symptoms.
- IX. You do not have to close the business just because someone at work develops coronavirus symptoms.
- X. If clinical advice is needed go to NHS 111 online or call '111' if there is no internet access. Call '999' only if a worker becomes seriously unwell, is injured or their life appears to be at risk.

## Accidents onsite

In an emergency, for example, an accident, fire, or break-in, people do not have to stay 2m apart if it would be unsafe.

People involved in the provision of assistance to others should pay particular attention to sanitation measures immediately afterwards, including washing hands.

Businesses should look to ensure their COVID Risk assessment takes into account such incidents like first aid measures. Additional precautions may be required such as:

Aprons, Face Visors, Additional gloves.

You should use the steps below to understand better your first aid needs.

- I. **Beware of the risk to yourself and others**, when approaching a casualty there is always a risk of cross contamination – especially when you may have to get close to the casualty to assess what is wrong or to check their breathing. It is always important to be aware of the risks of how this cross contamination has occurred. According to NHS 111 we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.
- II. **Keep yourself safe**, in line with government advice, make sure you wash your hands or use an alcohol gel, before and after treating a casualty also ensure that you don't cough or sneeze over a casualty when you are treating them.

The Resuscitation Council (UK) provides some useful advice of how to keep yourself safe when providing CPR.

- Don't lose sight of other cross contamination that could occur that isn't related to COVID-19.
  - Wear gloves or cover hands when dealing with open wounds.
  - Cover cuts and grazes on your hands with waterproof dressing.
  - Dispose of all waste safely.
  - Do not touch a wound with your bare hand.
  - Do not touch any part of a dressing that will come in contact with a wound.
- III. **Give Early treatment**, the vast majority of incidents do not involve you getting close to a casualty where you would come into contact with cough droplets. Sensible precautions will ensure you are able to treat a casualty effectively.
  - IV. **Remember your own needs**, these are challenging and uncertain times for all. The COVID-19 outbreak has meant a lot of upheaval and worry for people. In order to help others, you will also need to look after your own needs. Make sure you take time to talk about your fears and concerns with someone you trust and to take out time to look after yourself.

## *Travel to site*

Unless living in the same household workers should travel to site alone, using their own transport.

Those organising work sites need to consider:

- I. Parking arrangements for additional vehicles



- II. Other means of transport to avoid public transport
- III. Ensure where crew buses/minibuses are used that social distancing is maintained where possible
- IV. Ensure that hand cleaning facilities are available on the site. This should be soap and water wherever possible, or hand sanitizer if water is not available
- V. How someone taken ill would get home.

## *Site Access for Visitors / Contractors or others*

For businesses visited by customers or other members of the public:

- I. Use signs to direct people where to go to maintain social distancing.
- II. Only allow so many persons on the premises at once so there is no overcrowding.
- III. Put up signs telling persons they must not come onto the premises if they are feeling unwell or have symptoms.
- IV. Where inductions are given, refer to Covid-19 site safety measures.
- V. Place and regularly clean plexiglass or similar screens to separate workers from customers at checkouts, counters, or other points of interaction.
- VI. If you have a staff canteen, unless there is no practical alternative, close it and instead ask staff to bring their own food or arrange take-away food deliveries.
- VII. Ensure all social distancing, cleanliness, hygiene and stay at home measures apply equally in canteens and consider staggering staff breaks to minimise crowding risks.
- VIII. Require all contractors working at the workplace to demonstrate that they have social distancing and other procedures to minimise coronavirus risks as part of their employer's commitments.
- IX. It is advisable to prohibit contractors visiting the premises for anything other than essential work.
- X. Face masks are not recommended for use by anyone who is not in a clinical or social care environment. In such an environment face masks must be worn correctly, removed and disposed of properly and changed frequently.

## *Welfare Units*

### Toilet Facilities

- I. Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time.
- II. Wash hands before and after using the facilities
- III. Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush.
- IV. Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

### Canteens

- I. Where possible, workers should be encouraged to bring their own food.
- II. They should also be required to stay on site once they have entered it and avoid using local shops.
- III. Where there are no practical alternatives, workplace canteens may remain open to provide food to staff with appropriate adjustments for social distancing.
- IV. Canteens should provide a takeaway service providing pre-prepared and wrapped food only.
- V. Consider increasing the number or size of facilities available on site if possible
- VI. The capacity of each canteen or rest area should be clearly identified at the entry to each facility, and where necessary attendants provided to supervise compliance with social distancing measures.
- VII. Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
- VIII. Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced.
- IX. Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly, using standard cleaning products e.g. kettles, refrigerators, microwaves.
- X. Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance to any room where people eat and should be used by workers when entering and leaving the area.
- XI. A distance of 2 metres should be maintained between users, wherever possible.
- XII. All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up.
- XIII. Tables should be cleaned between each use.
- XIV. Crockery, eating utensils, cups etc. should not be used unless they are disposable or are washed and dried between use.
- XV. Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible.
- XVI. Canteen staff should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- XVII. Canteen staff and workers may use rest areas if they apply the same social distancing measures.
- XVIII. Consider arrangements for monitoring compliance.

## *Personal Hygiene*

Hygiene and cleanliness are essential to limiting the spread of coronavirus. The control measures are as follows: —

- I. The business must familiarise itself with the cleanliness and hygiene recommendations.
- II. Make sure there are sufficient places for employees to wash their hands, if needs be by providing (preferably hands-free) 'pop-up' handwashing facilities.
- III. Instruct and remind employees to cough and sneeze into tissues; and to wash their hands with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds frequently and always after coughing and sneezing.

- IV. Provide hand sanitizer and tissues for all persons at the workplace and bins for disposal of the tissues.
- V. Regularly clean and disinfect objects, equipment and surfaces that are touched frequently.
- VI. Any member of staff must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell with symptoms consistent with coronavirus.
- VII. Avoid hard copy materials and use digital or remote transfers wherever possible.

## *Workplace Hygiene*

For people who work in one place, workstations should allow them to maintain social distancing wherever possible.

- I. Workstations should be assigned to an individual as much as possible. If they need to be shared, they should be shared by the smallest possible number of people.
- II. If it is not possible to keep workstations 2m apart, then extra attention needs to be paid to equipment, cleaning and hygiene to reduce the risk.

## *Considerations for vulnerable persons*

Workers and members of staff who are considered vulnerable, for example through age or infirmity, to infection should receive extra support in relation to social distancing and other control measures. Pregnant persons are also considered vulnerable. Some workers and staff members may be in the "extremely vulnerable" category, on account of them.

- I. being organ transplant recipients
- II. suffering from cancer and/or having had certain cancer treatments
- III. having severe respiratory conditions (including cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD)
- IV. having rare diseases and/or conditions that greatly increase the risk of infections
- V. receiving immunosuppression therapy
- VI. being pregnant and having significant heart disease

Extremely vulnerable persons are subject to "shielding", a control measure aimed at protecting them through minimising their exposure to other people. The Government advice to extremely vulnerable persons includes that they must strictly avoid contact with anyone who displaying symptoms of coronavirus; that they should not leave their house or attend gatherings; and that they should not travel or go shopping. It follows that businesses should only allow extremely vulnerable persons to work for them where the work can be done from home. Business MUST ensure their risk assessment takes into account these groups and where possible a hierarchy of control is used to avoid greater exposure.

## Employee Health & Wellbeing

Taking care of your mind as well as your body is really important while at work or staying at home because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you.

It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Remember, this situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass. Staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.

The tips and advice here are things you can do now to help you keep on top of your mental wellbeing and cope with how you may feel while staying at home or at work. Make sure you get further support if you feel you need it.

*Try the 8 steps below to maintain a healthy mind set during COVID-19.*

- I. Find out about your Employment and Benefit rights.
- II. Plan Practical Things-
- III. Stay Connected with Others through calls or texts.
- IV. Talk about your worries and feelings if you're scared or concerned
- V. Take time to relax. This can help with difficult emotions and worries, and improve our wellbeing.
- VI. Look after your sleep Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough.
- VII. Keep Your mind active and do things you enjoy doing.
- VIII. Upon returning to work, settle back in, get familiar with the new way of working, speak to your supervisor or manager or safety representative if you are unsure, Ask the question.

## Basic Company / Employee Information

The provision of information is a significant control measure for risk awareness and infection prevention purposes. Businesses must make necessary measures to:

- I. Ensure staff are fully briefed and supported to minimise their anxieties about working and their livelihoods.
- II. Make regular announcements to remind staff and/or customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands regularly.
- III. Ensure all staff can be contacted urgently by telephone and/or email.
- IV. Inform and update your staff on the actions you have taken and are taking to reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus at work. Make sure that those on all shifts don't miss out on necessary instruction and information.

- V. If you have to send home a worker with symptoms and they have to use public transport, instruct them to keep away from other people as much as they can and to cough or sneeze into a tissue.

## Workforce Training

As like most industries New COVID-19 measures will greatly impact business normal practices. It will therefore be vital to ensure that new measures and work processes that are implemented are widely known by all employees. Training should be carried out to ensure a common understanding of the requirements of the new working norm are fully understood, instilling confidence that changes are in place to contribute to a safe workplace.

Businesses should ensure that:

- I. Team briefing documents or Tool Box Talks (TBT) are available and have been delivered in line with Physical/ social distancing where required.
- II. A safety talk is a hands-on way of reminding workers that health and safety considerations are important to an organisation. Using this method of communication ensures that you tell workers about requirements for the tools, equipment, materials and procedures they should use for particular tasks they undertake.
- III. Safety talks are a great way to engage with your workers and help to engage them in focussing on high-risk areas of the operation - or those that have been subject to high incidence rates so that all are more aware of the precautions that should be adopted in line with the relevant RA for the task.
- IV. Mandatory training is undertaken (Face Fit Testing; etc.)
- V. Any safety critical equipment has to be 'trained in' prior to issue.

## Communication

Communicating with the workforce is key to ensure workers understand COVID-19 related safety procedures. It will also ensure workers are kept up to date on how safety measures are being implemented and updated.

*Business should ensure the following are managed:*

- I. Providing clear, consistent and regular communication to improve understanding and consistency of ways of working.
- II. Engaging with workers and worker representatives through existing communication routes to explain and agree any changes in working arrangements.
- III. Developing communication and training materials for workers prior to returning to site, especially around new procedures.
- IV. Ongoing engagement with workers, including through trades unions or employee representative groups to monitor and understand any unforeseen impacts of changes to working environments.

- V. Awareness and focus on the importance of mental health at times of uncertainty. The government has published guidance on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- VI. Using simple, clear messaging to explain guidelines using images and clear language, with consideration of groups for which English may not be their first language.
- VII. Using visual communications, for example, whiteboards or signage, to explain changes to production schedules, breakdowns or materials shortages to reduce the need for face-to-face communications.
- VIII. Communicating approaches and operational procedures to suppliers, customers or trade bodies to help their adoption and to share experience.

## *General Principles*

- I. Non-essential physical work that requires close contact between workers should not be carried out.
- II. Work requiring skin to skin contact should not be carried out.
- III. Plan all other work to minimise contact between workers.
- IV. Stagger start/stop times and meal breaks
- V. Re-usable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use and not shared between workers
- VI. Single use PPE should be disposed of so that it cannot be reused
- VII. Increase ventilation in enclosed spaces
- VIII. Regularly clean the inside of enclosed work stations and vehicle cabs, and in between use by different operators.
- IX. Emergency plans are reviewed to consider Covid-19 guidelines
- X. First Aid box contents and procedures are revised
- XI. Communal areas are controlled; such as canteen, clocking station, smoking areas etc.
- XII. Wash workwear regularly.

## *Business Review and Compliance*

As part of the business compliance review, Workplace monitoring should take place onsite and within associated areas of the business to ensure the new measures relating to COVID are being implemented and adhered too. This will also give the business the learning tools to review and manage any potential non-conformances and lessons learned that can drive improvement. Potential tools for use:

- I. Workplace Inspections
- II. Audits
- III. Management engagement walk rounds (incorporating social distancing)
- IV. Online Workplace meetings (i.e. Zoom, Teams, Skype)
- V. Workforce engagement feedback



## *Related Information*

### **HSE Coronavirus Information**

A dedicated microsite providing additional information on various topics:  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/index.htm> including:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/working-safely-guide.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Confor Covid-19 Hub**

Wood processing and forestry related Coronavirus information:  
<https://www.confor.org.uk/covid-19/>

### **UK Government**

COVID-19: what you need to do

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Test and Trace Advice

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

Support for businesses and employers during coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus/business-support>

General guidance for employees during coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-and-support-for-employees-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

### **Coronavirus in Scotland**

Information and support in Scotland:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Test and Protect Advice in Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-protect-advice-for-employers/>

### **Coronavirus in Wales**

Information and support in Wales:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Test, Trace, Protect Advice in Wales

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect-coronavirus>

## **Coronavirus in Northern Ireland**

Information and support in NI:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Testing and Tracing Protect Advice in NI

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/testing-and-tracing-covid-19>