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

26 March 2020



Work to be carried out in commercial properties

OPERATING PROCEDURES DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

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INTRODUCTION

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

- British Constructional Steelwork Association (BCSA)
- Building Engineering Services Association (BESA)
- Builders Merchants Federation (BMF)
- Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECScotland)
- Electrical Distributors' Association (EDA)
- Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
- Lift and Escalator Industry Association (LEIA)
- National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- The Scaffolding Association
- The Scottish Building Federation (SBF)
- The Scottish Construction Group
- The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Federation (SNIPEF)
- SELECT
- The Stone Federation (GB)

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

What we are doing

We are in regular contact with the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture, Fiona Hyslop, and her officials and we are continuing to make them aware of the concerns of the industry and to ask her to use her influence to support our members especially around issues of employment and cashflow. These messages will change as the crisis develops.

The group held its first virtual meeting on 24 March and it was clear that the overriding issue for everyone was the conflicting messages issued by the Scottish and UK Governments over what construction work could or could not be undertaken.

We believe that there is still a need for further clarity and the Forum has agreed to issue the guidance on the following pages to businesses which operate in Scotland.

WHAT WORK SHOULD THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SCOTLAND UNDERTAKE?

On 24 March 2020, the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said her advice was “that non-essential building sites should close”.

Therefore, the Forum recommends that:

1. Businesses follow the First Minister’s advice regarding the closure of non-essential building sites.
2. 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, electrical and fire and security systems, roof and building fabric repairs, attending to lift breakdowns and releasing trapped users, telecom repairs etc. Your own trade association will provide further examples and guidance, but businesses should use their own judgement over what constitutes an “emergency”.
3. Any other construction work including, but not restricted to, the installation of new heating systems, re-wiring of properties, building of extensions, fitting of new kitchens etc, should be suspended in the meantime.

We understand that the Scottish Government is reviewing the position over the closure of sites and we will update this guidance as we receive information.

GUIDANCE

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

Every business must make their own judgements on the work they will do but they should understand the advice which the Scottish Government has issued over the steps to be taken to minimise the spread of Coronavirus.

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 bodies website.

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WORK CARRIED OUT IN COMMERCIAL PREMISES

- 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.
- It is important to ensure that Government guidelines, including maintaining a two metre distance from any household occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety:



www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

- 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.

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 on our homepage called "*letter to commercial customers.*"

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- 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, whilst exercising general best practise in line with the latest Government guidance for the public:



www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

- 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-70's, 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

- 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.
- 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.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE STARTING WORK AND AFTER WORK IS COMPLETED

- 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, whilst 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

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.

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

- British Constructional Steelwork Association
- Builders Merchants Federation
- Building Engineering Services Association Scotland
- Civil Engineering Contractors Association
- Electrical Distributors' Association
- Federation of Master Builders
- Lift and Escalator Industry Association
- National Federation of Roofing Contractors
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- The Scaffolding Association
- The Scottish Building Federation
- The Scottish Construction Group
- The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Federation
- SELECT
- The Stone Federation (GB)

For further details contact:



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