



76 Covid -19 Coronavirus. Safety Information Sheet

Prepared by LEIA Safety and Environment Committee

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Version 1 March February 2020

Covid -19 Coronavirus

There is understandably huge concern amongst both employers and employees on this matter. The government have issued some guidance, but how should the lift industry respond in a proportionate and sensible way?

This Safety Information Sheet has been prepared to assist members consider their own measures and is based on Government advice. The information provided in this document is intended for guidance and informational purposes only. Nothing contained within is to be considered as public health advice. Members should refer to the latest Government advice.

Background information

The virus

Covid-19 is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in China in January 2020 – it has since spread to other parts of the world.

The incubation period is between 2 and 14 days – so if you have come into close contact with someone with the virus if you have no symptoms after 14 days then you have not been infected (hence the 14 day quarantine period reported in the press)

Signs and symptoms

The following may develop within 14 days after exposure to someone with the virus

- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever

Where the virus affects people with weakened immune systems, older people and those with long term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease the symptoms can be more severe. As we know deaths have resulted from the virus.

How the virus spreads

Most likely the virus spreads from person to person – when there is close contact (2m or less) with an infected person.

We are all in these close contact situations every day but some of our field staff will be in contact with greater numbers than so the risk is higher.

The most likely route of transmission is when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the virus within the cough or sneeze passes to a second person.

The virus can live on surfaces for up to 72 hours so you could become infected by touching a contaminated surface – i.e. a surface is coughed or sneezed upon transfers to a person's hand then they touch their own mouth nose or eyes. This could be a door handle, a landing push button, escalator handrail ... the list is endless.

There is little evidence to show that people who are without symptoms are infectious to others.

How can we protect ourselves?

Employees will inevitably touch many different surfaces in the course of their work in locations which are beyond our control and it would be impossible to disinfect all the items we are likely to touch.

Protection is therefore by means of effectively washing or sanitising the hands regularly throughout the working day and always before touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

Frequently touched objects touched by multiple people should be cleaned and disinfected regularly – think about your own premises.

What about protective face masks?

There is no evidence these are beneficial outside the healthcare environments for prevention of contracting the virus and are not recommended for general use as a protective measure. Face masks are intended to be worn by those who are unwell, in order for the virus containing droplets from respiration, coughs and sneezes to be caught to reduce the likelihood of contamination on surfaces.

What about employees who have been on holiday or business abroad?

Recent half term many people will have taken a holiday abroad

The government have 2 lists of countries affected and these are likely to be updated. Actions are required by the returning person.

If returning from Category one locations - Wuhan City, Iran, cities in Korea and parts of Italy you must self-isolate – even if no symptoms – and call NHS 111

If returning from Category 2 locations (as of 270220 Tenerife not included) no special measures are needed but if symptoms develop, they must self-isolate and call NHS 111.

For countries and locations not listed staff can return to work as normal unless they have been informed, they have been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19. If they have been in contact with a confirmed case, they should self-isolate and contact NHS 111 for further advice.

For latest list see link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>

What is someone feels unwell at work ?

If someone feels unwell at work and they have not been to any of the specified areas within last 14 days then continue as normal – it is unlikely to be Covid-19.

If they have returned from a specified area then they should be isolated at the workplace and advice sought from NHS 111.

What if someone with suspected Covid-19 has recently been to your premises or workplace?

No restrictions or special controls are required until outcome of any test results are known.

What if someone with confirmed Covid-19 has recently been to your premises or workplace?

Workplace can remain open.

What if an individual in your team has had contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?

Should a member of your staff be a confirmed case then those staff who have had close contact with the confirmed case will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days from the time of the last contact – this would include

- Any employee in close face to face or touching contact
- Being in the same car or van as an infected person
- Being in same lift car as the infected person
- Anyone who has cleaned up bodily fluids
- Persons working in pairs or groups
- Any employee living in same household as a confirmed case

What if the Lift company is asked to attend premises of suspected or confirmed case?

Should a member of your staff be asked to attend a premises of a case, it is advised to follow the instructions of the local health / government authority.

This advice should be sought prior to the employees attendance.

*If during the visit it becomes apparent that the virus may be present, follow above guidance, call 111 and inform local authorities.

Cleaning up and disposal of waste

In the event of a suspected or confirmed case at your premises the premises need to be suitably cleaned and sanitised – detailed government guidance on this can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Materials to be used for decontamination are specified as is appropriate disposal of waste.

Actions for employees and employers in UK lift industry

Employees

- Wash your hands much more frequently than normal.
- Soap and water is fine and does the job but where soap and water are not available a hand sanitizer gel should be used.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are clean (just washed or sanitised).
- Remove gloves and wash/sanitise hands before eating, drinking or smoking
- Wash/sanitise hands before driving
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is clearly unwell.
- Let your employer know if you have returned from abroad within last 14 days.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and bin used tissues immediately.

Employers

- Provide sanitising gel where soap and water not available
- Encourage frequent hand washing
- Provide information to employees – public information posters available in appendix
- Identify those returning from abroad, identify from where they have travelled and advise accordingly.
- Ensure frequently touched objects and surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Ensure your own premises are suitably cleaned and sanitised should a case be confirmed in someone who has visited or worked there.

References

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas/covid-19-specified-countries-and-areas-with-implications-for-returning-travellers-or-visitors-arriving-in-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Appendix 1



CORONAVIRUS: PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Government and NHS are well prepared to deal with this virus.

You can help too.

The best way to protect yourself and others is:



Wash your hands with soap and water, or use a sanitiser gel, regularly throughout the day.



Catch your cough or sneeze in a tissue, bin it, and wash your hands.

If you have recently arrived back from specified areas follow the returning traveller advice.

Check the list of areas and find out more at

nhs.uk/coronavirus

CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

