Middlemarch Environmental Ltd COVID-19 workplace risk assessment

COVID 19 is a new respiratory virus that can affect your lungs and airways, and as such, it is mainly transmitted between people through "respiratory droplets". This can be in two ways. Directly through breathing in droplets emitted by an infected persons coughing, sneezing, talking and heavy breath or, through surfaces infected with the droplets such as keyboards, handles, work equipment which are touched then that person touches their nose, eyes or mouth. It can be fatal and poses different levels of threat to different people. Those over 70 or with certain underlying existing health conditions are particularly at risk. As such COVID 19 presents as a new hazard to be risk assessed and managed within the work-place. More information is available on those at risk here - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/

We are a national business with several offices and a varied workforce of office, field and remote working staff and it is important we adopt a companywide policy and safe system of work to manage the risks posed by COVID 19. As such our response and organisational risk assessment is based on Government guidance and information, guidance from our governing body CIEEM and our internal company policies to ensure we are acting responsibly both towards our staff and in the wider working environment. Current Government guidelines and rules including the legal requirements for self-isolating can be found here. https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

On 20th October 2020 Defra and Natural England published guidance for ecologists or environmental professionals carrying out field survey or mitigation works in England during the coronavirus pandemic. The guidance refers to interactions with mammal species as they are potentially susceptible to coronaviruses, and what to do if your work does not allow you to follow these guidelines.
The guidance states that to avoid transmitting COVID-19 from people to wild mammals you should:
- stay at least 2 metres from live wild mammals at all times
- only capture or handle live wild mammals if necessary
- avoid going within 2 metres of known burrows, dens, roosts or other breeding or regularly used resting sites of mammals, where possible.

<u>Risk assessment approach and safe system of work</u>

We have taken the approach of using the IOSH risk control hierarchy as set out below.

Covid-19 hierarchy of control
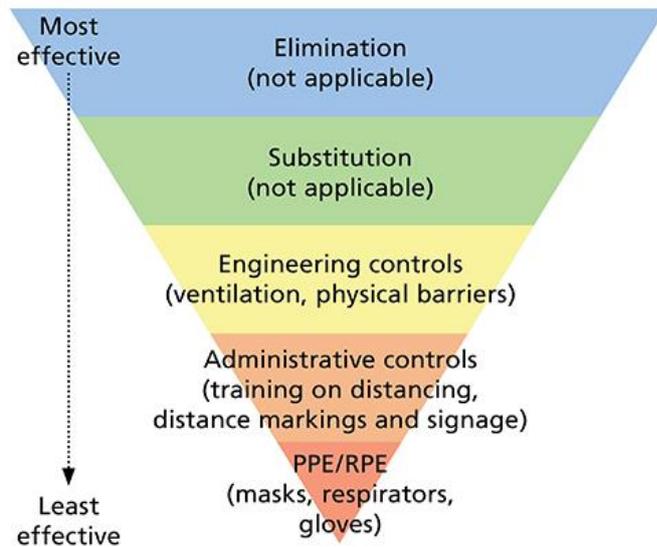
Engineering controls

- Those in the high-risk category have been removed from the workplace either through the furlough scheme or by being assigned tasks that can be done safely from home.
- Those that can work from home have been asked to do so and offices are being maintained by a skeleton staff.
- Anyone who self-isolates due to close contact with an infected person will need a negative CV 19 test before returning to any office-based work to avoid asymptomatic transmission.
- General return to work within the office will be phased as the rate of new cases drops and it becomes safe to do so in line with government guidelines.
- Workstation seating is to be spaced at two meters and where possible single occupancy office rooms are to be used.
- Office bathrooms and kitchens are restricted to single person use at any time.
- Workstations to be sanitised before and after each shift by the person using it.
- All staff with permanent desks are to sit at their own desks.
- Hot desks will be identified and numbered in a plan notified to all staff without permanent stations and booked prior to attending the office.
- No shared equipment where practicable, all equipment to be sanitised before and after use by the user before returning.
- Shared areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, stair wells, walkways are to be professionally cleaned every other working day and a record kept. Staff are also asked to clean kitchen areas after use and keep a record.
- Sanitiser to be made available for all tasks requiring it and to all staff. Sanitiser should be applied when entering the building at the station installed in the lobby. Hand washing should be done at regular intervals throughout the day.
- **Vehicle sharing.** Where possible one work vehicle is assigned to a person for project durations to minimise the sharing of pool vehicles. Pool vehicles to be sanitised before after

use by the user. Vehicle sharing is restricted to no more than 15 minutes by a maximum of two people. Masks with a minimum FFP2 protection level must be worn while sharing vehicles and sanitiser used before and after entering vehicles.
-   No surveys to take place in buildings that are occupied or have been occupied in the previous 48 hours.
-   No more than two surveyors to be present during internal surveys.

Administrative controls

-   A COVID 19 Risk manager to be appointed to oversee the safe system of work and ensure adherence and monitoring.
-   A dynamic risk assessment has been briefed and issued to all site staff for use on site to asses the safety of their work environment.
-   Staff have been briefed on the risks and mitigation measures and on their responsibilities in managing the collective risk.
-   Signage is placed around the offices informing staff of distancing and hygiene measures.
-   Cleaning records are to be kept for equipment and workstations.
-   Any staff member developing symptoms will report directly to the operations manager who will notify anyone that has worked closely with that person who can then isolate in line with government guidelines.

P.P.E

As a last line of resort in risk management we have considered the use of PPE in mitigating the risks against the current available information. While we are focusing our mitigation on the higher levels of control, we have implemented a mandatory policy of wearing masks and gloves when undertaking internal surveys or briefings, when sharing vehicles and entering any clients buildings and cabins.

Change

All available information will be monitored and used as it becomes available to inform this living document which shall be reviewed and updated as required by the COVID 19 Risk Manager

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