

# Hints and suggestions for foundries to help protect employees from exposure to COVID-19 (coronavirus)

## Introduction

In the UK there is requirement to undertake risk assessments for the variety of hazards that may affect the health of the workforce and this has been the case for many years. Covid-19 clearly represents a significant new risk due to how easily it can be transmitted through a population. All foundries, as indeed any business operating in the UK, present an opportunity for the COVID-19 virus to spread in the population.

The Cast Metals Federation has worked with members and, acting on the advice from the UK Government, Public Health England and other reputable sources, produced this guidance which may prove helpful to CMF members and the wider UK foundry industry in meeting its obligations to keep employees, contractors and visitors to site and other interested stakeholders safe.

Updates to this document will be made as more information from the UK Government, Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive becomes available, together with ideas from members and any other reputable sources. The most recent additions or changes to this document will appear in **dark red font** to enable 'at a glance' finding of new or revised information.

## Background

The information in this document has been compiled to enable foundries to remain operational during the coronavirus pandemic. The information has been written using the knowledge and understanding of foundry processes of our own staff, with contributions from members, whilst also drawing on publicly available advice from a number of sources. Where there is doubt, foundries are advised to refer to the official published legislation and guidelines from the UK Government and other official bodies.

The contents are additional to that which is publicly available from the UK government and other national bodies. It must be remembered that these are suggestions. Where statutory legal requirements exist, these take precedent and must be complied with.

*Annex 1 details links to guidance from official UK webpages.*

## Contents List

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Introduction	1
Background	1
Contents List	2
Risk Management	2
Social Distancing	3
Communications	4
Travel	4
Shift start / end	4
Rest Periods	5
Working Areas	5
Personal Hygiene	7
Contractors on site	7
Delivery / Collection Drivers	8
Handling deliveries	8
Site Health and Safety	8
Further considerations	9
Annex 1	10

## Risk Management

It remains the responsibility of the duty holder to do whatever is practicable to protect their workforce and any other person who has a reason to be on site. As defined by current UK health and safety legislation all employers need to undertake a risk assessment of their operations where hazards exist to ensure that a thorough review of what measures can be taken has been made, measures and controls required are identified have been instigated, and, that these measures are effective in operation. This responsibility includes the requirement to undertake an assessment for protecting the workforce from the Covid-19 coronavirus. The risk assessment must be communicated to all employees.

It will not be possible for every duty holder to implement every point identified in this document, but there are a range of suggestions and considerations that may assist duty holders in finding solutions to enable them to continue to operate safely.

It must be accepted that a more proactive management activity will need to be in place for the foreseeable future to ensure that all employees, contractors and visitors to site observe social distancing and any specified company rules. This may require that operator-supervisors spend less time being operators and more time on active supervision of others in the workplace.

It is important to be aware of changes to official guidance from the UK government and where guidance changes, it may be necessary to review the risk assessment, making necessary changes as required. If these changes will result in changes to working practices in order to keep employees safe, these changes must be communicated to all employees.

### **Social Distancing – Official Guidance from the UK Government:**

The advice on social distancing measures applies to everyone and should be followed wherever possible. Workplaces need to avoid crowding and minimise opportunities for the virus to spread by maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (3 steps) between individuals wherever possible. **Where this is not possible, the guidance is to try to maintain a distance of 1 metre between individuals while using additional protective measures such as PPE. This advice applies both to inside the workplace, and to where staff may need to interact with customers and or others who have a legitimate reason to be on the premises.**

Staff should be reminded to wash their hands regularly using soap and warm water for 20 seconds and particularly after blowing their nose, sneezing or coughing. Where facilities to wash hands are not locally available, hand sanitiser should be used. Workers should cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in a bin and immediately wash their hands.

- where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, and, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff.
- staff may be feeling anxious about coming to work and also about impacts on livelihood. Workplaces should ensure staff are fully briefed and appropriately supported at this time.
- make regular announcements to remind staff and/or customers to follow social distancing advice and wash their hands regularly.

### **Communications**

- Standardised plain and simple language for all employees at all levels of the business.
- Ensure that all levels of management are giving consistent advice following any policies, procedures and protocols established for communications. It is important to ensure that all employees are able to understand the information being provided to them.
- Place copies of official Public Health England Posters, information on hygiene and company coronavirus policies or rules around the site where they can easily be seen (without having to gather and breach social distancing rules).
- Significant findings from risk assessments must be communicated with employees where changes to current working practices, new hazards, new control measures or new practices have been identified. This is already mandated by current UK health and safety legislation.
- If sites are restarting after significant changes have been made, it may be of benefit to hold refresher inductions or training to help educate employees as to what will be required of them and to ensure they have been fully informed about the changes. It may be possible to do this via e-mails, or virtual meetings with employees actually being on site.
- The use of large visual boards to highlight information for employees may help to reduce the number of face-to-face meetings required with teams.

- Where team meetings are required, markings should be placed on the floor to help employees keep at a suitable distance from each other during the meeting. If a large team of people need to be updated with information electronic communications is an option, otherwise it may be necessary to hold several meetings to ensure all staff are updated with necessary information.

## Travel

- Commuting to work - the UK government has imposed rules on social distancing. People should keep 2 metres apart (even on those crowded tube trains). **Where this is not possible a 1 metre distance should be maintained with additional risk mitigation. It is a requirement to wear face coverings on all public transport.**
- Unless they are people who live together in the same household, such as family members, **or two households that form a social bubble**, employees should **ideally** be 2 metres apart and therefore not car sharing.
- Where employees are travelling together, we have information of those employees being kept as a working group so that break times and start / finish times are kept together, so the workforce is broken into groups.
- If employees do have to share vehicles, **the current guidance that would apply would be to, where possible, maintain at least a 1 metre distance, with risk mitigation measures.** Opening windows to increase ventilation is recommended. Vehicles should **routinely** have contact surfaces cleaned with anti-bacterial wipes after use e.g. door handles, seat belt clips, hard surfaces and seats (mainly leather).
- Company vehicle drivers should be provided with hand sanitizers and cleaning materials for use after travelling and being on customer's sites or other locations. This will apply to both cars and commercial vehicles used.

## Shift start/end times

- Staggered start / end times – This will allow businesses to have fewer people in changing areas / showers at the same time (and in clocking in/off areas).
- Regular cleaning of any hard surfaces including door handles, hand scanners, fingerprint scanners, handrails on stairs etc. should be undertaken
- Additional shifts – It may be possible to reduce the number of employees working at any one time by the use of additional shift patterns (where it is feasible). This will have the same benefit as for staggering start and end times.
- Checking employee's temperature at the start and end of any shift, to help proactively look for changes in employee health
- Staggering on-premises hours to reduce public transport use during peak periods will provide benefit to employees, businesses and the wider public effort.
- Consider the use of electronic devices at entrances accompanied by short questionnaires that have to be completed with simple questions such as have you: been tested for coronavirus; been suspected of having coronavirus within the past 14 days; been in close contact with someone suspected or confirmed of having the virus within the past 14 days; experienced any of the primary symptoms such as a new cough or a fever or breathlessness in recent days. If the person confirms yes to any of the questions, suggest they leave site and contact HR for further information on what to do.

- Place company codes of conduct at gates and entrances, reminding employees as to what is expected of them by company policies for keeping themselves and their colleagues safe.
- If possible, prevent warm air hand dryers from being used in changing areas / washing facilities and replace with single use paper towels.

## Rest Periods

- Spread out chairs and tables in canteens. It may be useful to mark individual areas where people can sit and keep 2 metres apart (as of the date of the latest revision to this document this remains the current best practice). All surfaces should be cleaned after use by individuals before the next user at that location.
- Staggered break times will minimise people being in the same room and/or washing areas at the same time.
- Splitting teams/workers into two shifts, with a gap for cleaning between shifts (also helps to provide protection in terms of business continuity, as there is cover for key workers/operations).
- Use of offices or stores or despatch areas, where noise can be controlled, PPE removed and suitable warmth provided and seating spaced out, so that more people can rest / eat whilst still keeping appropriate distancing is an option.
- Staff should avoid taking breaks together in shared cars, only using the one they travelled to work in.
- Eating and drinking on the shop floor, in areas where hazardous substances may be inhaled or ingested, is already prohibited under existing regulations. There are no exemptions to this under any situation.
- Where tables and chairs cannot be spread out, removal of some may be an option to help maintain distancing.
- Signs placed onto tables to remind employees about maintaining safe distances and good hygiene practices.
- Areas on site where employees can smoke are being extended to help prevent gatherings in smoking shelters – remember smoking is not allowed inside buildings by law. Markings on floors using spray paint can be made to help keep people at safe distances.
- where it is possible to remain 2 metres apart, using signage such as floor markings to facilitate compliance, particularly in the most crowded areas. This includes entry points to buildings, toilets and communal break areas where queues may form.
- Where possible, staff should be encouraged to bring their own food, and staff canteens and distributors should move to takeaway.
- If possible, prevent warm air hand dryers from being used in changing areas / washing facilities and replace with single use paper towels.

## Working Areas

- Many sites will be able to allow people to work at distances of 2 metres apart (or more) as normal practice. Where people currently work closer together, a review of the operation should be undertaken to see if reasonable adjustments can be made to increase the physical distance between employees. Recent changes to UK government guidance do allow for a 1 metre spacing if 2 metres is not possible, but additional risk mitigation measures, such as PPE or screens, must be used.

- Where there are known existing hazards to health and PPE/RPE should be worn, it must be still be worn. If correctly fitted, FFP3 masks (**without exhaust valves**), tight-fitting half-face masks or powered respirators are worn, they will help to prevent airborne droplets or aerosols (passed when people speak or sneeze) from being passed directly to others. They will also help prevent these same droplets or aerosols settling onto surfaces where others may put their hands.
- The use of gloves by everyone working where tools and / or other items are shared, will help to prevent the virus being passed on via skin contact. Every person who requires gloves should have their own and should not be sharing with another person.
- Splitting workloads into multiple teams where possible will enable distancing at work and allow core activities and duties to be undertaken with business continuity enabled as well as protecting the workforce.
- Where possible, all doors that would have to be operated by hand rather than just pushed against could be held / wedged open to prevent handles having to be used. Security of the premises has to be maintained however, **as does fire safety**, so not all doors will be able to be secured this way.
- High use areas and equipment such as printers, photocopiers, tea making facilities etc. should be subjected to a much higher rate of cleaning during this period. It may be possible to utilise staff on a higher frequency cleaning loop to ensure good hygiene is maintained throughout the day, with a thorough cleaning at the end of each working day, ready for the next.
- encourage the use of digital and remote transfers of material where possible rather than paper format, such as using e-forms, emails etc.
- provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water, hand sanitiser and tissues and encourage staff to use them
- where it is possible to remain 2 metres apart, use floor markings to mark the distance, particularly in the most crowded areas (for example, where queues form).
- where it is not possible to remain 2 metres apart, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible. **If only a 1 metre distance is possible, additional risk mitigation measures, such as PPE in addition to working side by side, will need to be used.**
- where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible
- keep teams of workers together (cohorting) and these teams as small as possible
- where it is possible to remain 2 metres apart, use signage such as floor markings to facilitate compliance, particularly in the most crowded areas. This includes entry points to buildings, toilets and communal break areas where queues may form.
- Screens may be able to be used to help separate personnel working in some areas on the shop floor. They may also be able to be used in offices and reception areas to segregate employees from visitors. If screens are used in areas where high velocity objects may impact them, they will need to be polycarbonate, not clear Perspex. This is to ensure that impact resistance is provided in order to help reduce injury. It is worth using coloured tape to highlight the edges of screens to prevent people walking into them.
- Where multiple stair cases to offices or other working areas exist, use of a one-way system can be considered to reduce incidences of contact.
- **While moving around site in corridors or restricted space walkways, the introduction of one-way systems, preventing conversations and the taking of phone calls in these areas may be considered.**

## Personal Hygiene

- All persons at work must follow the guidance from government on social distancing and good hygiene practices.
- Washing hands on a regular basis for 20 seconds using soap and water helps to prevent the spread of the virus. All employers must ensure they supply soap and hot water, and where necessary, a supply of antibacterial hand sanitiser.
- All persons should be encouraged to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouths wherever possible, and particularly after being close to another person.
- If any employee feels unwell at work both the individual and the company must follow UK government guidance on how to deal with this situation.
- If possible, prevent warm air hand dryers from being used in changing areas / washing facilities and replace with single use paper towels.
- If possible, encourage employees to bring their own towels for drying after washing when changing at break times or end of shifts. These towels must not be shared with any other employee.
- Remove reusable hand towels from changing rooms and rest areas and replace with single use disposable towels.
- Where cutlery is provided in rest areas, it would be advisable for employees to bring their own or to replace normal items with disposable plastic cutlery. Cutlery should not be shared.
- Consider where possible, in men's toilets only using every other urinal to help with social distancing.
- Showers can still be used on site but if they are communal, rather than having individual cubicles, then distancing must take place, so consider only allowed every other or every third shower head to be used. Maximum times for shower use can be implemented to help reduce exposure time for workers to each other.
- **Individuals should cover any coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in a bin and immediately wash their hands. It may also be possible to use the crook of the elbow to catch a cough or sneeze, but it is not as effective as a tissue over the mouth and nose.**

## Contractors on site

- At present essential contract companies can still work on premises with the approval of the site. All contractors should be made aware of any policies set in place by individual businesses and be prepared to adhere to them at all times. This includes specific site rules for preventing the spread of the coronavirus to your workforce and vice versa.
- All contractors should receive a site induction and this include the location of toilet facilities that they are allowed to use. All specific rules around personal hygiene and distancing must be made clear to them.
- If contractors may need to be close to any member of staff while working, the contractors must have with them suitable PPE in the form of masks and gloves. Ideally they will have cleaning materials with them as well for wiping down surfaces after use.

## Delivery / Collection Drivers

- If you have goods delivered to, or collected from, your work premises, you **MUST** let visiting drivers have access to suitable toilets and handwashing facilities. It's important at any time, but right now it's vital that drivers are able to wash their hands when they need to.
- If necessary drivers can be escorted to the toilets to ensure they are safe while walking through site. Remember to keep 2 metres apart while walking, **or if space is a little congested 1 metre apart with risk mitigation measures applied.**
- You are breaking the law if you refuse access to visiting drivers. You are also putting the drivers and others at risk of spreading the coronavirus.
- (If you are curious which bit of the law applies, it's the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulations 20 and 21).

## Handling Deliveries

- Items with hard smooth surfaces at present are believed to allow the virus to survive for far longer periods than on paper or clothes. It would be worth considering that protective gloves be worn by anyone who has to handle items delivered to site, either immediately or within a couple of days or so, to help reduce the risk of exposure.
- Where possible, surfaces of delivered items should be wiped down with anti-bacterial wipes or a cloth with a weak solution of disinfectant, to help reduce the risk of the virus surviving on the items.

## Site Health & Safety

- If shower facilities are closed, alternatives to help employees remove the worst of any dirt, dust, oils, grease etc. should be provided. Employees should not be expected to travel in their own vehicles or on public transport without being able to have a wash prior to getting into them.
- Employees should be able to change out of their work clothes into their own clothes before leaving site.
- If shower facilities are closed, all measures necessary to prevent bacteria such as legionella growth must be taken. Shower systems should be cleaned and purged on reopening of showers before any employee is allowed to use them.
- Any water systems where the potential for legionella bacteria to flourish should be treated before stopping use and purged / dosed with treatment chemicals and be tested for safe use before employees work with them.
- The use of lifts by more than one person at a time should be discouraged where possible. If lifts do have to be shared, numbers should be kept to a minimum and people should not face each other. Good personal hygiene practices with regards to coughs and sneezes must be followed by all lift users.
- Where hand rails are mandated to be used by all persons on site, these must be cleaned on a regular basis. Consideration should be made of having hand sanitiser at every entrance / exit points for staircases.
- All first aid facilities should have sufficient cleaning materials available so that a deep cleaning of the room can be undertaken if it is used.

- First aid kits can remain on the shop floor but consideration should be made with regards to having break tags fitted to handles or opening locks to prevent them being used other than for a genuine first aid situation. Plaster dispensers should be prevented from being used and plasters issued by first aid personnel or supervisors as required.
- In the event of first aid having to be rendered on the shop floor or any other area outside of the first aid room, a deep clean of the area where the casualty was treated should be undertaken, especially if any bodily fluids have been spilt. All packaging from first aid equipment used and any cleaning materials should be disposed of in the normal way, including sealing in bags before placing into the waste receptacles.
- If CPR has to be used to treat a casualty, only undertake chest compressions. **DO NOT** do the breath portion of CPR. If possible, use a face covering over the mouth and nose of the casualty to prevent aerosols being transmitted. Seek further advice from your first aid training provider, St John Ambulance or The Resuscitation Council UK. If available, the person undertaking the CPR should wear suitable PPE such as an FFP3 mask.
- Employees who have a hearing impairment may need to be able to see the facial movements of those talking to them to help understand what is being communicated. It is therefore important to consider this need and how the workforce is able to interact with each other, where relevant.

## Further Considerations

### Temperature

- It is understood that the Covid-19 coronavirus lives for longer on surfaces and appears to be even more transmissible in colder and more humid conditions. Therefore, it will be advisable to review and consider before the seasons change through Autumn and Winter, methods and equipment for local heating where possible, to help boost the temperature of the working environment. This will be of a greater importance in areas where employees are not able to work for long periods at a 2 metres distance and have to be at 1 metre or less for a large part of their working shift, be that in one spell or made up of several shorter spells.
- In winter temperatures, it may be necessary to consider every employee using a face covering for their entire working shift, aside from when wearing RPE while undertaking tasks that require it to be used, and/or in warmer areas such as canteens or offices. Consideration of employees with hearing impairment who may need to lip read as part of being able to communicate safely needs to be undertaken.

### Other Ailments

- It may be that employees who are attending work while suffering with new coughs, colds or flu may be masking symptoms of the virus by those presented with these other ailments. It may therefore be prudent to consider the policy of people coming to work when they are suffering such conditions.

### Workplace Hazards to consider - Noise

- Recent local spikes of coronavirus cases that have occurred around the country and in EU nations have identified employees needing to work close to each other on production lines that are noisy as well as and/or cold, are places where the virus can transmit easily. This is

in part, but not wholly due, to employees needing to shout to be heard over operating machinery. This increases the risk of the virus spreading, therefore it is advisable that face coverings are worn. Measures to reduce excess noise from equipment where feasible, should be considered. As above in the temperature suggestions, consideration of employees with hearing impairment who may need to lip read as part of communicating must be taken seriously.

## Annex 1

UK Health & Safety Executive – [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Public Health England - [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

### **UK Government webpages**

UK government guidance for working during the coronavirus pandemic

Factories, plants and warehouses

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

Offices and contact centres

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

Vehicles

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

Safer travel for Passengers - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers>

If you are a UK foundry and would like more information about the Cast Metals Federation, please use the QR code below, or visit [www.castmetalsfederation.com](http://www.castmetalsfederation.com)



**Date of issue - 7 JULY 2020**