INTRODUCTION

The UK’s Maritime Industry is critical to keeping our country functioning. From support to our sea transport network, vital for the delivery of key supplies such as food and medicines, to support of the Royal Navy and key defence outputs, it is important that the maritime industry continues to operate during the Coronavirus crisis. It must do so safely however, to protect our employees and to protect our health service and save lives.

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

The UK Government’s Guidance for Employers and Businesses remains extant, but in consultation with industry, the UK Government has now produced ‘COVID-19 secure’ guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible. The new guidance covers 8 workplace settings which are allowed to be open, from outdoor environments and construction sites to factories and takeaways. This sets out practical steps for businesses focused on 5 key points, which should be implemented as soon as it is practical:

1. Work from home, if you can;
2. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions;
3. Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible;
4. Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk;
5. Reinforce cleaning processes.

There is no guidance directly applicable to the maritime industry and you may need to use more than one of these guides as you think through what you need to do to keep employees safe.
The purpose of this note is to provide a summary of the Government advice and industry best practice relating to COVID-19 and its transmission, adapting it for applicability to the maritime industry and setting out the range of mitigations so that workplace risk assessments are as consistent as possible and proportionate to the COVID-19 risk.

Companies should perform their own risk assessments and put in place measures specific to their own settings, using this note and more detailed guidance where required.

**Risk Management in the Workplace**

Where work is undertaken in the maritime industry, companies are expected to identify and mitigate risks from COVID-19 on their workforce. This risk management activity will reduce the likelihood of individuals being exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace. There are interactive tools available to support you from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at [https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/assessment.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/assessment.htm)

When undertaking these risk assessments, the Hierarchy of Controls should be used:

i. **Eliminate the risk.** Where the social distancing in the workplace principles cannot be followed in full in relation to a particular activity, companies should consider whether the activity should continue.

ii. **Substitute the risk.** Where activities must continue, companies should consider how the activity can be modified to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

iii. **Engineer out the risk.** Where the activity cannot be adequately modified, companies should consider mechanical means of controlling contact between individuals (e.g. use of screens).

iv. **Control the risk by procedures.** Companies should also consider additional procedures to reduce the risk of transmission (e.g. hand washing, wiping down of surfaces).

v. **Protect people from the risk (PPE).** Given the current global shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), companies should only consider the use of PPE as a final resort, noting that current PHE guidance does not advise the use of face masks, gowns etc. outside of clinical care settings.

The sections below provide examples of suitable mitigating measures to minimise the potential for COVID-19 transmission that can be used when conducting activity risk assessments. You should share the results of your risk assessment with your workforce. If possible, you should consider publishing the results on your website (it is expected that all employers with over 50 workers will do so) and there is a notice contained in the Covid-19 secure guidance that you should display in your workplace.

**Managing the Workforce**

Anyone who meets one of the following criteria should not travel to or attend the workplace:

- Has the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) – follow the guidance on self-isolation.
- Are in an extremely vulnerable group and should be shielded.
- Is living with someone in self-isolation.

Non-shielded, but still vulnerable individuals who are at higher risk of severe illness have been asked to take extra care in observing social distancing and should be helped to work from home whenever possible, either in their current role or in an alternative role. If vulnerable individuals cannot work from home, they should be offered the safest available roles.

Members of staff who live with a person who is in a vulnerable or extremely vulnerable group should be strongly advised and supported to follow social distancing guidelines whilst at work.

If an employee develops a high temperature or persistent cough while at work, they should return home immediately, avoid touching anything, cough or sneeze into a tissue and bin it, or sneeze into the crook of their elbow. They must then follow the guidance on self-isolation and not return to work until their period of self-isolation has been completed.
The Government has now extended coronavirus (COVID-19) testing to anyone who has the symptoms of coronavirus. Employers can register and refer essential workers for priority testing and employees can book a test directly for themselves or members of their household who are experiencing symptoms.

Companies may wish to consider the use of temperature checking of employees on arrival at work. Whilst this is not official guidance, it can provide an additional layer of assurance and serves as a reminder to employees.

Where feasible, consider splitting employees into ‘red’ and ‘blue’ teams with alternate days working from home, or split across a day and night working pattern. Assign employees to the same shift teams to limit social interaction.

**Travelling to Work**

Wherever possible employees should travel to work alone using their own transport. Companies should consider:

- Encouraging means of transport other than public transport e.g. cycling.
- Parking arrangements for additional cars and bicycles.
- Providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if not.
- How someone taken ill would get home.

**Site Access Points**

At site entrance and exit points, companies should consider:

- Refusing access to all non-essential visitors or anyone who is displaying the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Introducing staggered start and finish work times to reduce congestion and contact.
- Monitoring of access points to enable social distancing – you may need to change the number of access points – increase to reduce congestion or decrease to enable monitoring.
- Remove or disable entry systems that require touch contact (e.g. keypads).
- Defining process alternatives for entry/exit points where appropriate, for example, deactivating pass readers at turnstiles in favour of showing a pass to security personnel at a distance.
- Require all employees to wash or clean their hands before entering or leaving the site.
- Allowing plenty of space (two metres) between people waiting to enter the site.
- Regular cleaning of common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control and delivery areas (e.g. scanners, turnstiles, screens, telephone handsets, desks, particularly during peak flow times).
- Reducing the number of people in attendance at site inductions and consider holding them outdoors wherever possible.

**Protection at Work**

- All employees should wash their hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds or more at the beginning and end of every break, when they arrive at work and before they leave. The frequency of this can be increased where handling or touching shared equipment is required so that good hand hygiene is undertaken before and after each use. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitiser gel should be used. To help with this, adding additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities, providing soap, water, sanitising wipes and/or hand sanitiser should be considered. Facilities should be checked regularly to ensure soap, water and/or sanitiser is kept topped up.
• Employees should avoid touching their hands to their mouth or nose, especially if they are unwashed. If they do touch their mouth or nose, they should wash their hands straight afterwards.
• Re-usable PPE should be thoroughly cleaned after use and not shared between workers.
• Single use PPE should be disposed of so that it cannot be reused.
• The frequency of cleaning procedures should be increased, pausing during the day, if necessary, for areas to be wiped down with disinfectant.
• Employees should be prevented from congregating at break times through considering arrangements such as staggered break times so that employees can continue to practice social distancing when taking breaks.
• Workplace layouts and processes should be reviewed to allow employee to work further apart from each other.
• Floor tape or paint should be used to mark areas to help staff maintain 2m social distance.

Working in Ships, Submarines and other floating structures
When working in ships, submarines and other floating structures, particularly alongside personnel from other organisations, there will be situations where it is not possible or safe for workers to distance themselves from each other by 2 metres. General principles that can be used to reduce the risk of coronavirus (COVID-19) transmission include:
• Non-essential work that requires close contact between workers should not be carried out.
• Plan work that is required to minimise contact between workers; only the minimum number of people required to safely complete the task should be involved.
• Use a consistent pairing system where personnel are required to work in close proximity.
• Where the 2-metre distance cannot be maintained, personnel should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible.
• Implement one-way systems where possible when moving around the platform.
• Where personnel are required to work within 2 metres of each other and cannot work side by side or facing away from each other, the use of facemasks should be considered, as a last resort, to prevent the projection of respiratory droplets generated by coughing or sneezing by the wearer.

nb - the use of scarves or other clothing garments as makeshift facemasks is not recommended as they could present snagging hazards and incumbrances to other operations.
• Unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide that PPE free of charge to those workers who need it. Any PPE required must fit properly.
• Regularly clean touchpoints, doors, hatches, handrails, control panels, operating buttons etc.
• Increase ventilation in compartments where possible, including with additional ventilation trunking where necessary.
• Risk management activities should be co-ordinated with other organisations when working within the same vessel.

Meetings
• Only absolutely necessary meeting participants should attend.
• Attendees should remain two metres apart from each other wherever possible. If that is not possible, attendees should avoid facing each other and meetings should be limited to no longer than 15 minutes.
• Rooms/spaces should be well ventilated / windows opened to allow fresh air circulation.
• For areas where regular meetings take place, use floor signage to help people maintain social distancing.
• Consider holding meetings in open areas where possible.

Managing Visitors
• Where site visits are required, site guidance on social distancing and hygiene should be explained to visitors on or before arrival.
• Encouraging visits via remote connection/working where this is an option.
• Limiting the number of visitors at any one time.
• Determining if schedules for essential services and contractor visits can be revised to reduce interaction and overlap between people.
• Maintaining a record of all visitors, if this is practical.
• From 8 June, visitors travelling to the UK will need to fill in an online form to provide their journey and contact details before they travel. On arrival in the UK they will be required to go straight to a place where they can self isolate for a period of 14 days. Exemptions to this policy, which may be relevant to the maritime industry, include:
  o Visitors from Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man;
  o a worker undertaking activities in offshore installations, upstream petroleum infrastructure, critical safety work on offshore installations and wells that are being decommissioned or which are being preserved pending demolition or reuse or activities for the provision of workers, goods, materials or equipment or in the provision of other essential services required to support the safe operation of activities;
  o a worker with specialist technical skills, where those specialist technical skills are required for essential or emergency works or services (including commissioning, maintenance, and repairs and safety checks) to ensure the continued production, supply, movement, manufacture, storage or preservation of goods;
  o seamen and masters;
  o a pilot, as defined in paragraph 22(1) of Schedule 3A to the Merchant Shipping Act;
  o an inspector, and surveyor of ships;
  o defence personnel and contractors doing work necessary for the delivery of essential Defence activities, including Visiting Forces and NATO;
  o an official required to work on essential border security duties;
  o a person who resides in the UK and who pursues an activity as an employed or self-employed person in another country to which they usually go at least once a week.

Cleaning Routines
Enhanced cleaning routines should be put in place across the site, particularly in communal areas and at touch points including:
• Taps and washing facilities.
• Toilet flush and seats.
• Door and hatch handles and push plates.
• Hand rails on staircases and corridors.
• Lift and hoist controls.
• Machinery and equipment controls.
• Food preparation and eating surfaces.
• Communications equipment.
• Key boards, photocopiers and other office equipment.
• Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

In the exceptional circumstance that individuals are expected to undertake cleaning activities during which they could be exposed to possible or confirmed COVID-19 then the minimum PPE to be worn is disposable gloves and an apron and/or surgical mask/Fluid Repellent Surgical Mask and eye protection. Refer to the Public Health England COVID-19 cleaning in non-healthcare settings.

Toilet Facilities
• Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time e.g. use a welfare attendant.
• All employees to wash hands before and after using the facilities.
• Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush.
• Portable toilets should be avoided wherever possible, but where in use these should be cleaned and emptied more frequently.
• Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.

Galleys and Eating Arrangements
• Employees should be asked to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles from home to avoid opening canteens if at all possible.
• Where facilities are provided for heating food and making hot drinks, equipment such as kettles, microwaves etc. should be kept clean between use. Where this is not possible, they should be removed from use.
• Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of spaces made available for eating or drinking and should be used by all employees when entering and leaving the area.
• Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced.
• Employees should sit 2 metres apart from each other whilst eating and avoid all contact.
• Tables should be cleaned between each use.
• All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up.
• All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices.

Changing Facilities, Showers and Drying Rooms
• Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
• Introduce enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day.
• Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time to maintain a distance of two metres.
• Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

**Inbound and Outbound goods**

To maintain social distancing and avoid surface transmission when goods enter and leave the site, especially in high volume situations (for example warehouses or despatch areas) companies should consider:

• Revising pick-up and drop-off collection points, procedures, signage and markings.

• Minimising unnecessary contact at gatehouse security, yard and warehouse for example non-contact deliveries where the nature of the product allows for use of electronic pre-booking.

• Ordering larger quantities of inbound materials less often to reduce deliveries.

• Where possible and safe, having single employees load or unload vehicles.

• Where possible, using the same pairs of people for loads where more than one is needed.

• Enabling drivers to access welfare facilities when required, consistent with other guidance.

• Encouraging drivers to stay in their vehicles where this does not compromise their safety and existing safe working practice, such as preventing drive-aways.
Links to Further Information


Staying alert and safe (social distancing). Cabinet Office, The most important thing we can do is to stay alert, control the virus, and in doing so, save lives, dated 11 May 2020.


Coronavirus (COVID-19): getting tested. Department of Health and Social Care, Guidance on coronavirus testing, including who is eligible for a test and how to get tested, updated 19 May 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): travellers exempt from UK border rules. Home Office. This guidance explains who will be exempt from new UK border rules introduced due to coronavirus. The rules will apply to travellers to the UK from 8 June 2020, dated 22 May 2020.

