

COVID-19

SAFER WORKING PRACTICES: GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

Although significant numbers of members are continuing to work from home, we know that many more are not able to work remotely and that large numbers have continued to work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. But this cannot mean business as usual.

Wherever you work, stringent safety measures must continue. This will require careful engineering of tasks and clear briefing of colleagues by their line managers. Prospect representatives should be consulted about proposed arrangements, based on the health and safety hierarchy used to minimise risk.

Proposals for work should address the following questions:

- Is the job really necessary – can it be left or postponed or redesigned to achieve the same operational objective?
- If necessary, how can the job be organised in order to maintain social distance, plus wider health and safety?
- Has the job been planned so colleagues leave site once they have completed their part of the task?
- Has our communication on-site established that everyone understands their role and that everyone is both fit and competent to complete it?
- If, in exceptional or emergency situations, social distancing cannot be maintained, how will the risk be managed and contact minimised?

Representatives and members should also be mindful to apply the precautionary principle and not rely on incomplete knowledge:

- Some coronaviruses can last on surfaces for up to nine days.
- There is currently insufficient knowledge about immunity to COVID-19: there is evidence that other zoonotic infections can come back.
- The reliability of the various tests for COVID-19 is complex – so check what the tests actually mean.

REMEMBER:

- ✓ **Safe systems of work – including social distancing – are our first line of defence.** These systems should be applied at all times, including breaks, to maintain social distancing.
- ✓ **Work must continue to be safe in all the usual ways as well,** and colleagues showing symptoms must not work.
- ✓ **PPE should always be worn where needed, but it is the last resort –** and definitely not a solution for all circumstances. PPE remains a vital but last line of defence.