

# TOOLBOX TALK

## Social distancing at work hierarchy of control

Running a water and wastewater company is an essential service and we have over 4 million customers every day relying on us. Large utility companies like ourselves have to continue to run and maintain our assets not only to preserve current supply but to prevent failures in the future.

Therefore it's vitally important that we are able to continue working to provide these critical services at a time of huge need within the country.

This additional Toolbox Talk outlines the hierarchy control measures we are implementing to assist with social distancing at work but recognising that our activities will still need to take place every day.

## What we have done

As previously stated the business has already introduced measures regarding employees only entering customers' homes for essential activities. Where the occupants are isolating due to either COVID19 symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has. A small number of colleagues have been identified and issued with appropriate PPE in order to conduct those activities safely.

Due to the very limited supply of face masks across the UK, we have conducted a number of tests using disposable masks, effectively misusing them and repeatedly putting them on and off and then subjecting them to multiple face fit testing protocols. This experiment successfully demonstrated that even the disposable masks are reusable and offer good protection and passed the face fit test on each occasion. As a result we will be recommending that disposable face masks are reused as detailed below in this document.

On the next page is a hierarchy of control that is being introduced to give clear guidance on how we'll continue to run our business whilst trying to keep our employees exposure levels to a minimum.

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Please note in some circumstances where quick action is needed to maintain supply, social distancing will not be possible, these occasions will be exceptionally rare but are not unique to NWG as there are hundreds of thousands of healthcare workers, police, refuse collection and other utility providers whose employees are out working every day without additional PPE, in order to provide essential services that we all rely on.

## Hierarchy of control

- Travel in separate vehicles, spare company vehicles will be used to facilitate this and the company will also pay for mileage and insurance if a personal vehicle is used to enable this to happen.
- People must not congregate in kitchens, canteens, mess rooms, restrooms and offices. There will only be one person allowed in a room at the time in these spaces, unless a distance of 2 m can be maintained.
- Before each task please complete your specific **COVID-60 Second Check** on Coruson.
- Maintain good hand hygiene at all times - before and after the task.
- Check with colleagues that they are displaying no symptoms (persistent cough and or fever).
- Keep 2 m apart from colleagues and members of the public and always explore alternative means of conducting the task safely that maintains social distancing.
- If social distancing is not possible due to the nature of the task:
  - If both employees involved in the task have been issued (facemasks FFP3 or P3) RPE and have conducted face fit testing, then continue the activity using the PPE.
  - The above also applies to employees who have full face visors as these act as a physical barrier preventing droplets passing from individual to individual and they give additional protection to the eyes. This control measure is suitable only for short duration activity (such as lifting a manhole) and only if prior agreement for that type of activity has been given by a manager. This is not suitable for prolonged exposure and this should be escalated as described below.

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- If RPE is not available and the task would not result in the immediate loss of supply please stop the activity and escalate to your line manager.
- Line managers will then discuss alternative options for the activity or call for support from other colleagues within their Department who have been issued RPE or full face visors, so they can continue, thus reducing potential exposure.
- If loss of supply is imminent and no PPE is immediately available, limit exposure to the shortest time possible and ensure good hand hygiene practices are followed before and after. Use disposable gloves or hand sanitisers when available or wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

## What we need you to do

- Synchronise your Coruson app - so the new COVID-60 Second check downloads on your device.
- Adhere to the hierarchy of control detailed in this Toolbox Talk.
- Please try and reuse your disposable face masks and keep them in good condition as there are limited stocks in the UK and we must all play a part in trying to preserve our stocks. Treat them as a precious commodity and do not issue them to colleagues who have not had face fit testing or friends and family.
- The only caveat to the above point, is when employees have entered a customer's property that is isolated due to the occupants having COVID19 symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has, the disposable mask, coverall, gloves and overshoes must be disposed of immediately after use. The same procedure applies following contact with asbestos. In these situations additional care must be taken to remove the PPE and dispose of it immediately into a black bag, the face mask should be removed last and good hand hygiene practices followed immediately after the removal of the PPE. Do not touch your face until you have washed or sanitised your hands. Remember to clean tools and equipment after use.

Finally please continue to conduct your normal 60 Second checks, these are especially important during times of restricted resources and pressure. The same hazards that face us every day are still there and need to be managed as well as COVID19.