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## CURRENT CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

### What is Coronavirus?

A virus causing severe lung disease that started in China has spread to around 40 countries, including the UK. The coronavirus had infected 78,927 people in China as of 28 February, with 2,790 of them dying.

### What are the symptoms?

It seems to start with a fever, followed by a dry cough. After a week, it leads to shortness of breath and some patients require hospital treatment.

### How deadly is the coronavirus?

Based on data from 44,000 patients with this coronavirus, the WHO says:

- 81% develop mild symptoms
  - 14% develop severe symptoms
  - 5% become critically ill
- The proportion dying from the disease, which has been named Covid-19, appears low (between 1% and 2%) - but the figures are unreliable.

### What should I do to prevent catching and spreading the virus?

To protect against infection, the NHS has advised people to wash their hands frequently with soap and water or a sanitiser gel.

It is best to catch coughs and sneezes with tissues, which should be thrown away immediately afterwards. Be sure to wash your hands after disposing of tissues.

Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

The World Health Organization advises keeping at least a metre between you and other people, particularly those who are coughing, sneezing and have a fever.

### What is the official advice?

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is warning against all but essential travel to 11 quarantined towns in Italy, two cities in South Korea and mainland China.

The Department of Health says anyone who has returned from those specified parts of Italy and South Korea, as well as Iran, since 19 February should call the NHS 111 helpline, stay indoors and avoid contact with others.

Anyone who has returned in the past 14 days from Hubei Province in China - where the FCO has warned against all travel - should do the same.

# CONSTRUCTION SITE FIRE - FAQs

## Who has duties for Fire Safety on a construction project?

Clients, designers, principal designers, contractors (including principal contractors and construction workers) all have legal duties under The Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 to eliminate and control the risks from fire safety.

The “responsible person” is defined under the Fire Safety (Regulatory Reform) Safety Order 2005 (England and Wales)/Fire Scotland Act 2005 (Scotland) and have specific duties for fire safety.

## Who should carry out a Fire Risk Assessment?

A responsible person/duty holder is usually the employer, owner or occupier. They have a duty to assess the risk from fire and put measures in place that provide adequate protection against the risk of fire. (e.g. escape routes, warning systems).

## What is a fixed alarm system?

This is a fire warning system that alerts people working on site to make their way to an escape before a fire becomes life threatening. The warning signal should be distinctive and heard above other site noise. Types of alarms used will vary depending on the size of site and the nature of the risk. On small low risk sites, the alarm may be raised by shouting but on high risk or larger sites a fixed and interconnected system (wired in or wireless) of call points and sounders will be required to provide an effective warning system. Further guidance can be found in BS 5839:1:2002 + A2:2008 Fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings. Code of Practice for system design, installation, commissioning and maintenance (ISBN 978 0 580 604386). Fire detectors (smoke or heat) may not be suitable on construction sites during the build phase.

## How many fire extinguishers do I need?

The number and type of fire extinguishers needed depends on the fire hazard. The fire risk assessment will identify the hazards. The primary purpose of a fire extinguisher is to aid escape from a fire. In some limited circumstances they may be used by a trained person to fight fires in the early stages.

The fire extinguisher should be suitable for the potential fire:

water	For wood/paper/textile and solid material
powder	For liquid and electrical fires
foam	For liquid fires
Carbon dioxide	For liquid and electrical fires

- fire extinguishers should be located at identifiable fire points at each storey exit and these should be serviced and maintained
- fire extinguishers will also be needed for those carrying out hot work

## Can I let people sleep in a building under construction?

No. It is essential that no one sleeps within a building under construction or refurbishment because suitable fire precautions will not be in place and in the event of a fire the rescue services would not assume occupancy and therefore not carry out a search and rescue.

In limited circumstances, purpose built sleeping accommodation may be provided on site with adequate separation distances from the building under construction. These will require a specific fire risk assessment to identify the fire precautions that will be required. Purpose built sleeping accommodation should include a flushing toilet, a sink and shower both with hot and cold (or warm) running water. There should be a nearby separate area where meals can be prepared & eaten including a means to boil water.

Further guidance can be found in Fire safety risk assessments-sleeping accommodation Department for Communities and Local Government 2006(ISBN 978 18511 2817 4).

# INSURER WARNS HOT WORK FIRE CLAIMS HAVE SPIKED

Contractors are being urged to use thermal imaging cameras to tackle the recent spike in fires sparked by hot work.

Hot work such as welding, grinding and roofing are now a major cause of fires on non-domestic sites undergoing construction or refurbishment. Home Office data shows that between January 2015 and March 2019, fire crews in England attended 1,587 construction fires – of which 28% were caused by hot work, or other sources of heat.

One insurer Zurich has seen the cost of claims it handles spike to £250m in the last three years. But the insurer says handheld thermal imaging devices, costing as little as £400, could help tackle the problem and is urging contractors to consider adopting them as standard. Zurich also wants contractors to adopt a voluntary licensing system that would see contractors complete a training course before carrying out or supervising hot work.

A similar 'passporting' approach used in Scandinavian countries since the 1980s, has significantly reduced hot work fires to less than 5% of fire losses over the last decade. Contractors complete a one-day training course giving them a licence valid for five years.

Kumu Kumar, Director of Risk Engineering for Zurich UK, said: "The construction industry already has robust hot work controls in place but with fires continuing to break out, additional measures are urgently needed.

"Thermal cameras could further strengthen the industry's existing safeguards and help to detect more hot spots before they ignite.

"The devices can also be used to take time-stamped photos to demonstrate fire watches have been carried out. Although there is no single solution for preventing hot work fires, this is a relatively cheap and simple measure that could have a far-reaching impact, especially if the cameras are adopted as standard."



## NEW WORKERS MOST VULNERABLE

### New to the job

Workers are as likely to have an accident in the first six months at a workplace as during the whole of the rest of their working life. The extra risk arises due to:

- lack of experience of working in a new industry or workplace
- lack of familiarity with the job and the work environment
- reluctance to raise concerns (or not knowing how to)
- eagerness to impress workmates and managers.
- This means workers new to a site:
- may not recognise hazards as a potential source of danger

- may not understand 'obvious' rules for use of equipment
- may be unfamiliar with site layout
- may ignore warning signs and rules or cut corners.

### Six steps to protect new starters

#### 1. Capability

- Assess the new starter's capabilities. For example:
- literacy and numeracy levels
- general health
- relevant work experience



- physical capability to do the job
- familiarity with the work being done and the working environment (especially where conditions change rapidly, such as on construction sites).

Don't forget to assess cultural and language issues (grasp of English) too, where relevant - you may need to use visual, non-verbal methods such as pictures, signs or learning materials such as videos/DVDs/CD-ROMs.

## 2. Induction

Provide an induction. Plan it carefully, including photos of hazards where possible, and use plain, simple language. Take time to walk around the workplace or site with new workers and show them where the main hazards exist (e.g. falls, slips and transport).

## 3. Control measures

Make sure the control measures to protect against risk are up to date and are being properly used and maintained:

- Involve employees and health and safety representatives in discussions about the risk and how best to make sure new starters are protected.
- Emphasize the importance of reporting accidents and near misses.
- Make any necessary arrangements for health surveillance.
- If required, make sure suitable personal protective equipment is provided and maintained without cost to the workers.

## 4. Information

Provide relevant information, instruction and training about the risks that new workers may be exposed to and the precautions they will need to take to avoid those risks.

## 5. Supervision

Provide adequate supervision. Make sure workers know how to raise concerns and supervisors are familiar with the possible problems due to unfamiliarity and inexperience.

## 6. Check understanding

Check workers have understood the information, instruction and training they need to work safely, and are acting on it, especially during the vital first days/weeks at work. Remember to make sure workers know how and with whom they can raise any concerns about their health and safety and that they know about any emergency arrangements or procedures.

## Vulnerable workers

Young people may lack the experience and maturity at work of their colleagues, so could be more at risk. There are particular factors you need to consider for this group of new starters in the workplace.

Migrant workers are another group that may be particularly at risk when starting work.

## Accident rates by length of time in job

The table below shows how much higher the risk of having an accident is for new starters, compared to those who have been working for longer.

The figures given are the number of RIDDOR-reportable accidents (first column) and the number of accidents of all kinds (second column) expected for every 100 000 workers.

Length of time in job	Reportable injury	All workplace injury
Less than 6 months	3 316	9 861
6 to 12 months	1 023	3 821
1 to 5 years	1 084	3 092
Over 5 years	973	2 829

Together with the wider evidence from the Labour Force Survey, this suggests a doubled risk of injury in the first six months of employment.

# CONTRACTOR FINED FOR STUDENT BLOCK FIRE SAFETY FAILINGS

The main contractor was among three firms ordered to pay fines totalling £670,000 after admitting fire safety failings at a building used for student accommodation in Leeds.

Judge Mairs at Leeds Crown Court heard how Trinity Halls on Woodhouse Street had only one available fire escape which was compromised due to combustible materials, putting at serious risk the 27 students who had moved in, in September 2016.

The court heard the students had moved into the building on the upper ground floor while other floors were still under construction. There was a string of other failures which contributed to the significant risk including lack of appropriate fire alarms and detection, exposed timber framing, the storage of flammable items on stairwells and no markings indicating fire escape routes.

Judge Mairs described the situation as having the “potential for catastrophe.”



The failings came to light in September 2016 after a concerned father called West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) to report the building. He had been dropping his daughter off to live there but became concerned by the state of the premises and would not let his daughter stay.

Trinity Developments Ltd, the owners of the building, admitted four safety breaches. Niche Homes Ltd, contracted to manage and let the property, also admitted the same four breaches.

These are:

- Failing to make a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment.
- Failing to take precautions to make sure the premises were safe from risk of fire.
- Failing to provide appropriate fire detection and alarm system.
- Failing to provide an adequate number of fire escape routes and exits.
- In addition to this APP Construction Ltd, who were contracted to design and build the property, admitted one charge of:
- Failing to provide an adequate number of fire escape routes and exits.

At previous hearings guilty pleas were entered to the charges, all relating to the period September 24th 2016 to September 27th 2016. The companies were all offered credit in court for their early guilty pleas. Acceptable safety measures are now in place at the building. Judge Mairs said that all the companies had “high culpability” and that “the risks were so obvious that a member of the public spotted them – so they should have been obvious to the companies involved.”

In sentencing, he fined APP Construction Ltd £450,000, Trinity Developments Ltd £160,000 and Niche Homes Ltd £60,000. The three companies also agreed to pay costs. APP Construction Ltd will pay £9,000. Trinity Developments Ltd will pay £6,000 and Niche Homes Ltd will also pay £6,000.

Following the sentencing Chris Kemp, Senior Fire Protection Manager for West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, said: “This case demonstrates the importance those responsible for building construction, development and occupation have in understanding their duties and acting responsibly to take account of the safety of the people they are responsible for. As Judge Mairs highlighted, the dangers and risks found at Trinity Halls were so obvious anyone without a technical fire safety background could identify them. The conditions that were found on site were such that some of our senior officers have not seen such blatant disregard for the law and the safety of residents in 28 years.”

# MANUAL HANDLING LEAFLET REVISED

The HSE leaflet 'Manual handling at work: A brief guide' (INDG143) has been updated.

The revised leaflet is aimed at employers. It explains the problems associated with manual handling and includes guidance on how to deal with them. It gives useful practical advice on reducing the risk of injury from manual handling and will help employers carry out their duties under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.

The updated version brings the risk assessment process in line with Manual Handling Operations regulations 1992 L23 (fourth edition) published 2016, Appendix 1 to help identify low-risk tasks and includes:

- more information on the simple risk filters for lifting and lowering and carrying operations
- simplified advice on pushing and pulling with new simple filter pushing/pulling illustrations
- a simple filter for handling while seated

The section on safe handling techniques from the previous version has been moved to HSE's website.

There are no changes to regulations or policy.

The leaflet is available to download for free on the HSE website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

## SAFETY INNOVATIONS

### Cartridge tube opening device

Traditionally cartridges are opened with a fixed blade knife. This presents a safety issue due to risk of the knife slipping.

To resolve this, the site team are using a tool that is designed specifically to open a cartridge and trim the application nozzle. The tool has internal fixed blades that are guarded to protect the user from injury.

The tool quickly and neatly opens the cartridge and cuts the application nozzle to the correct angle. The user whilst completing this operation is fully protected from the cutting blade.



### Wearable epilepsy management watch

This innovation stems from the policy to carry out an occupational health risk assessment on all personnel. As a result, an individual who suffers from epilepsy was identified as being at potential risk when carrying out their work.

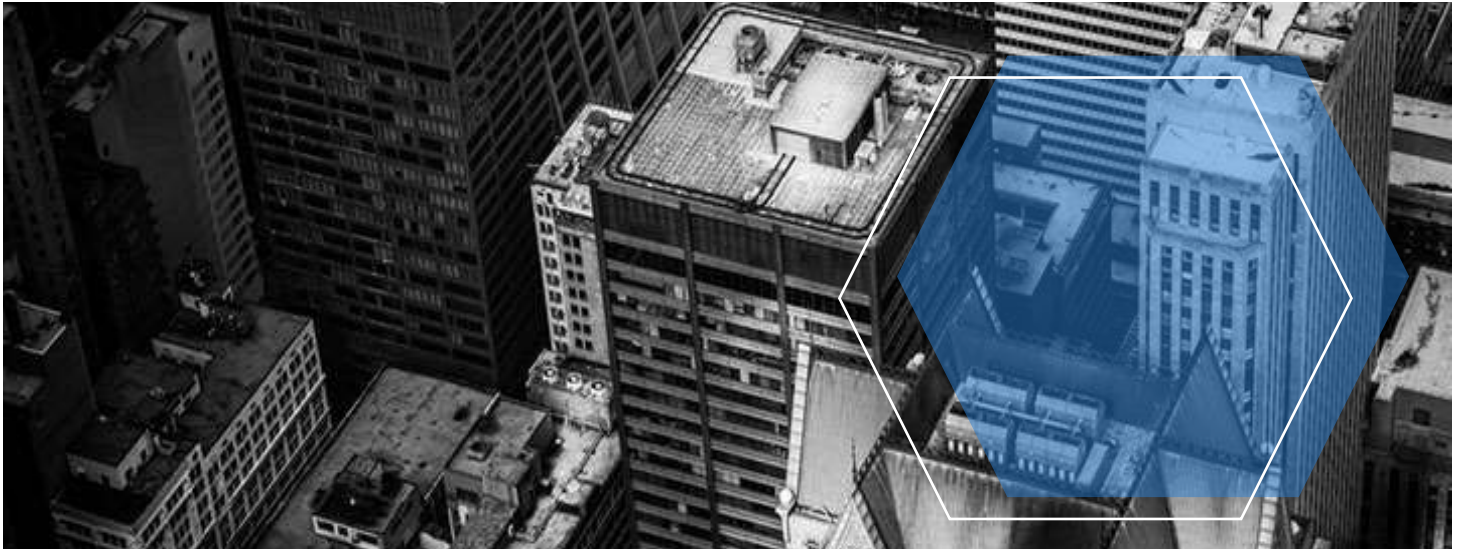
The company identified a watch made by Empatica, which is able to recognise changes in a person that could result in the oncoming of an epileptic fit, and uses GPS technology through connection to a smartphone to track and identify the location of the person needing help.

The watch alerts can be paired with up to three other phones – a friend or colleague, a relative or anyone else that could either summon assistance or help. The watch was purchased by Sir Robert McAlpine for the individual as a result.

In a recent incident involving the member of staff on site, the watch mechanism recognised the signs that an epileptic fit was imminent and sent messages out to the three people on the project team who had a phone registered with the watch.

When found the person was indeed suffering a seizure and had not been able to take the rapid response medicine they normally carry to help prevent an immanent fit before collapsing. It was down to the Empatica watch they were found and given medical assistance.





## E-LEARNING

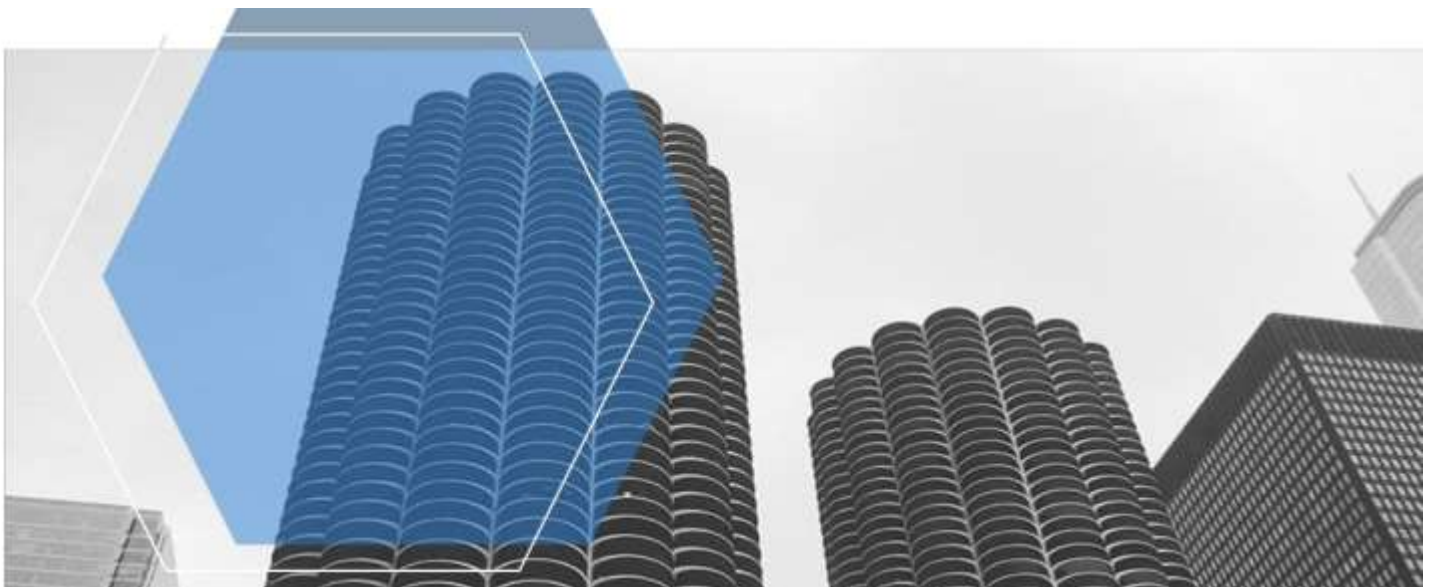
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## FREE CDM ADVICE

[CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL](#)

Do you need help understanding the CDM Regulations 2015? Not sure if you are complying with your duties correctly? We offer a free CPD consultation to keep you up to date. One of our experienced CDM Consultants will attend your offices or a location of your choosing and provide up to the minute, competent advice. We cover everything from Duty Holders to Design Risk Management and welcome any questions or scenarios you need help with. Please get in touch if this would be of interest to you.





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