Social distancing at work:

A guide for all colleagues at Western Power Distribution

August 2020

PLEASE KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

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WESTERN POWER DISTRIBUTION

Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales

Keeping you safe at work

Throughout the pandemic, staff and public safety has been our main priority. This guide provides you with the information you need to work safely at this difficult time.

Our staff work in a range of very different settings – from offices to depots and work sites **both in and outdoors**.

In this guide you'll find advice relating to social distancing at each of these settings, as well as the use of vehicles.

Please take the time to read and familiarise yourself with this guide.

By following the advice closely, all staff should be able to continue to work safely.

Coronavirus safety – Guidance for all staff

This guide will provide advice relating to different WPD settings.

But a few of the guidelines are the same for all of us.

✓ Shielded colleagues in England and Wales should continue to follow the latest Government advice.

✓ All staff should follow social distancing where possible (and use protective measures where this is not).

✓ Staff should ensure they understand and apply the COVID SECURE rules in place at their work location

✓ If you have symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you should seek a test and stay at home. If the test proves positive you should stay at home for a minimum of 10 days from when your symptoms started (this may be longer if you are still feeling unwell after 10 days). If the test is negative you can return to work when you are feeling well enough to do so.

✓ If you are isolating because you live with someone who has symptoms, you must continue to isolate for 14 days even if you receive a negative test. You may only end isolation early if the person with symptoms in your household also receives a negative test. If you are isolating because you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace or because you are required to under public health measures on return from holiday (quarantine), you must continue to isolate for 14 days even if you receive a negative test.

Hygiene advice

✓ **Do:**

1 **Wash your hands** with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds

2 Always **wash your hands** when you get home or into work

3 Use **hand sanitiser gel** if soap and water are not available

4 **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze

5 Put used **tissues in the bin** immediately and wash your hands afterwards

6 **Avoid close contact** with people who have symptoms of coronavirus

7 Only **travel on public transport** if you need to

8 Use phone, online services, or apps to contact your GP surgery or other **NHS services**

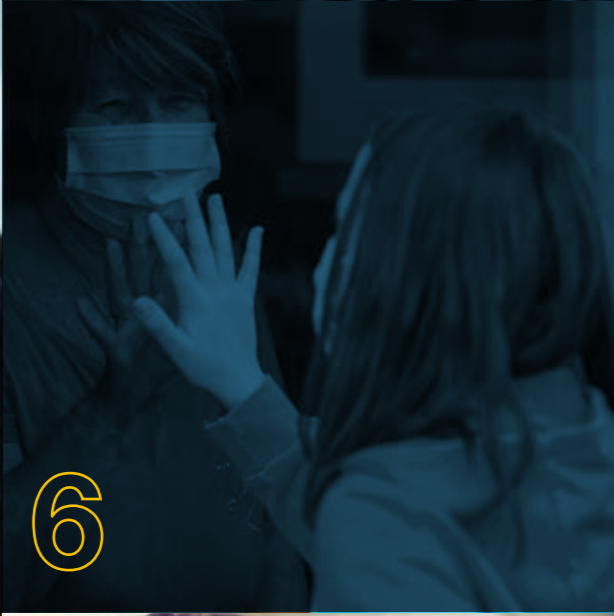**9** **Do not make physical contact** with others such as shaking hands.

⊗ **Don't:**

Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

Further information is available at the NHS website:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19

The latest coronavirus information for staff can be found on SharePoint or Blackberry Share in the 'Coronavirus Updates' section.

Social distancing... travel & use of company vehicles

No-one with coronavirus symptoms should use a company vehicle or mobile plant.

We have where practicable placed staff into smaller groups (bubbles) to minimise the interaction between them and have put additional support in place, including:

- Guidance on the protective measures to be considered where vehicle sharing takes place

- Guidance on vehicle sharing during the COVID-19 outbreak

- Focused on cleaning of touch points where vehicles are shared between members of staff.

Travelling to and from work

If you have to use public transport, we have:

- Provided guidance on travel including considerations to avoid travel where alternatives can be used

- Provided Covid-19 specific Risk Assessments for all WPD depots including details of guidance for what is expected when visiting specific depots/locations/training centres.

Social distancing... in offices/depots

We're keeping the number of people at offices and depots down. This is to prevent workspaces from becoming overcrowded and to maintain social distancing wherever possible.

Shared surfaces, such as printers and photocopiers, should be used with caution. All 'high touch' surfaces should be cleaned by users before and after use and are being prioritised during increased levels of office cleaning. Hot-desking is actively discouraged.

We've also reviewed the layout of our offices and depots to keep desks and work stations in line with the current government social distancing guidance. All staff should stay at their desks where possible and avoid unnecessary movement around the site.

The use of walkways, corridors, lifts and stairs is being carefully regulated – with signs and one-way systems where necessary to enable social distancing.

Canteens and rest areas should only be used where it is possible to stay a safe distance apart. Staff are encouraged to bring food that does not need to be heated or refrigerated.

Signs and posters are in place in and around workplaces to remind staff of the importance of keeping a safe distance. There are also additional handwashing and cleaning facilities in place.

Face to face meetings can now take place with the minimum number of people possible – including with visitors, but we should still encourage phone and video calls as a preference.

Measures are also in place to ensure social distancing in toilets, showers and changing facilities.

To maintain a COVID secure environment in offices a degree of home working will be required.

Social distancing... in stores and stock areas

We're keeping the number of people accessing stores and stock areas to a minimum, so that everyone can observe social distancing.

⭐ We're also scheduling times for the collection and drop-off of tools and equipment where possible.

⭐ When picking stock, staff should wear washable or disposable gloves. All staff should observe strict hand hygiene.

⭐ Notices and floor markings are in place to remind staff about social distancing.

What to do if social distancing is not possible…

We understand that social distancing may not always be possible in stores and stock areas.

Where this is the case, control measures will be put in place. These include:

Use of protective measures

Installation of screens and barriers at points of regular interaction

Use of barrier face coverings.

Steps should also be followed to minimise contact with 'high touch' surfaces and to ensure these are cleaned and sanitised regularly.

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Social distancing... on work sites

We have reviewed our site layouts to ensure that work can be carried out in line with social distancing, and to plan for situations where this may not be possible.

Before entering a customer's home, staff should first assess if the virus may be present among people already there. Barriers should be used to prevent access to potentially infected areas, where necessary.

It is also important to follow WPD guidelines for access to premises where people are self-isolating and to take precautions to protect vulnerable people who may be in the area.

We're making sure that only the minimum number of people required are allowed on site, to prevent overcrowding and to ensure social distancing can be maintained.

Staff should work together in small teams (bubbles) to prevent staff coming into contact with those from other teams/rotas/shifts. Staggered start and finish times are recommended, where multiple teams are involved.

Staff should avoid changing worker rotas and shift patterns where possible.

Where possible, access and egress points should be controlled, or a separate entrance and exit set up.

We're making sure all staff are regularly reminded of the need for social distancing and that handwashing facilities (or sanitising products) are available.

Staff should avoid sharing tools or equipment. Where this is unavoidable, these should be cleaned before and after use.

What to do if social distancing is not possible…

Where social distancing is not possible, control measures are in place.

These include:

Staff working side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face

Use protective equipment in line with the WPD protective measures matrix.

Social distancing... for visitors and contractors

Only essential visitors are allowed at WPD sites. Access arrangements should be made before the visit and visitors should be made aware of the guidelines to follow for working on the site.

- Ideally, visitors should have a designated work area that can be cleaned after use.

- Deliveries or collections should take place outside where possible, maintaining a safe distance.

- Protective measures, screens and barriers, and face coverings are all in use to minimise contact with visitors.

- Facilities should be made available to allow visitors to wash or sanitise their hands when entering and leaving the site.

Visitors must not attend a WPD site if they:

- Have symptoms of coronavirus

- Are being tested for coronavirus

- Have been in contact with anyone who has a cough, high temperature or shortness of breath.

If you are unsure or have concerns

If any staff feel that the work they are being asked to complete is outside of this guidance or they don't feel able to manage the risk, then they should speak to their line manager in the first instance.

If they still have concerns they should contact the safety helpline on **01216 239 299**.

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