

COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECT



Re-starting projects and sites after a temporary shutdown or reduction in operations can present specific hazards, which if not planned or managed properly, may result in damage, injury, legal action and further disruption to your business.

HERE'S WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR:

Where activities are scaled up compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be an increased risk of:

- accidents / injury
- machinery, plant, equipment or services damage or breakdown
- fire explosion
- escape of water issues.

These may be caused by a variety of factors including delayed maintenance cycles, frequent start up and shut down procedures, changes in procurement and human factors.

Your business operations and activities may need to adapt due to supply chain challenges, changes in shift patterns and staffing etc. Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk

management measures, should all be re-assessed and adapted. This may include:

- method statements
- safe systems of work
- working procedures and arrangements for training
- cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
- inspection, maintenance and servicing of machinery / plant and equipment
- fire and security protection systems
- water damage management procedures.

If you've furloughed staff, you'll need to consider the timeframe agreed for returning to the workplace, so allow for this in planning arrangements.

If you're unable to create a safe working environment on site, those operations should be postponed until corrective measures can be put in place.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The following provides a checklist of key considerations to safely recommence and progress your projects:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance, including those relevant to:
 - travel to work
 - driving at work
 - welfare provision
 - cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
 - social distancing
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - staggered working hours and breaks.
 - ventilation
 - face coverings
 - managing records of employees, subcontractors and visitors to support test and trace.

Where the regulations and guidance can't be met, work activities should either be revised to achieve them or stopped altogether. Guidance is available from:

- **UK Government**, including **COVID Secure guidance** specific to Construction and other outdoor work
- **Public Health England**
- **Health Protection Scotland**
- **Public Health Wales**
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE).**



Specific **Site Operating Procedures** guidance is also produced by the **Construction Leadership Council**. These procedures are subject to periodic change, with updates available at the **Construction Leadership Council**

Information relating to testing and vaccinations can be found in **our testing and vaccination PDF** and the **People FAQs section** of our Coronavirus Resource Hub. Further information can also be found via the above referenced government websites.

- **Review existing project and site management plans** to check they're relevant to the site's operation, your activities and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe working environment. This will include, but isn't limited to:
 - o construction phase
 - o fire safety
 - o water damage
 - o traffic
 - o waste
 - o security
 - o own method statements and risk assessments (whether you're a principal contractor or subcontractor).

Where site operations and control measures are required to change, plans should be updated and careful consideration given to whether:

- o new method statements and risk assessments require completion. If so, formally share the results and consequent actions with your own employees (including any temporary and agency personnel), subcontractors, essential visitors, and where appropriate, your client
- o fire, water damage, security, and COVID-19 specific precautions are in your review, implementing changes and / or enhancements where necessary to maintain an appropriate level of protection. Specific considerations may include:
 - the scope of fire and intruder alarm detection, CCTV coverage



- and guarding
- opening / closing procedures
- suitability, condition and maintenance of temporary water supplies
- providing adequate and suitable welfare facilities, including areas for safely changing, storing and drying clothing and personal protective equipment
- provision and maintenance of suitable ventilation
- the adequacy of arrangements for social / physical distancing, for example via:
 - > work planning to avoid close working
 - > managing breaks and welfare provision
 - > use of vehicles and plant / machinery / equipment
 - > restricting visitor access
 - > careful management of site meetings and training delivery
 - > improved signage
 - > physical barriers
 - > personal protective equipment (PPE) provision and use.

Further support can be found on the **construction sector page** of our Allianz risk management portal and in the **Construction Insurance Risk Engineers Group (CIREG) Best Practice Guidance on Managing Escape of Water Risks on Construction Sites**.

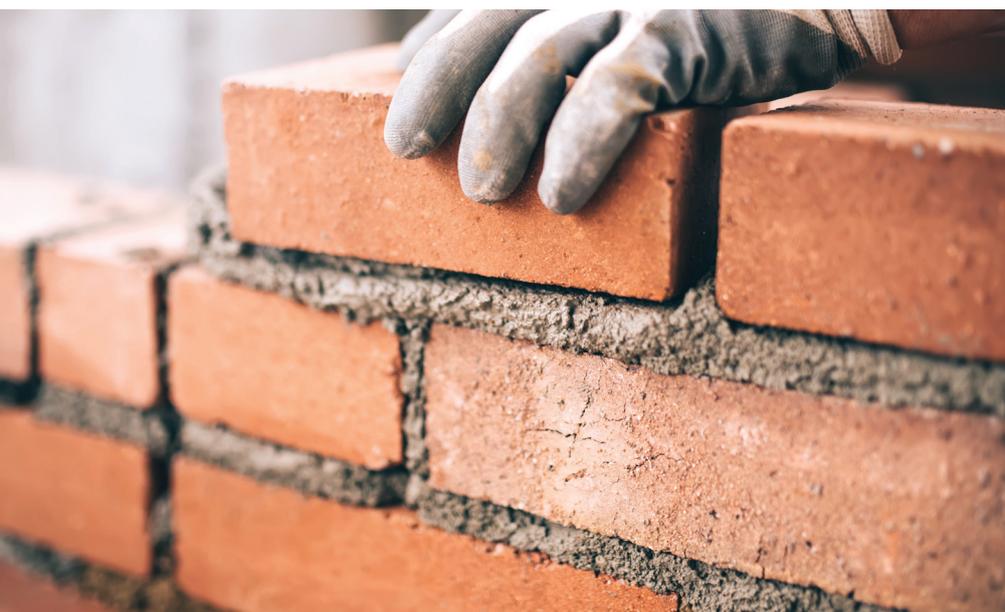
- **Consider how and when to communicate to employees, operatives and subcontractors** regarding re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations, including proposed site rules:
 - o can electronic / remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
 - o before activities start, should the first days of re-opening be used to communicate expectations, deliver training, deal with maintenance / inspection issues, and the practicalities of managing challenges relating to social and physical distancing?
- **Prior to reopening, develop procedures for cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation** including:
 - o enhanced cleaning regimes, additional cleaning stations and associated cleaning materials, to comply with regulations and guidance
 - o potential touch points, including communal areas such as washing facilities, toilet flushes and seats, door handles and push plates, hand rails, access equipment, office equipment, machinery and mobile plant controls, food preparation areas and company vehicles.



- **If you're the appointed principal contractor for the project** ensure that:
 - o updated risk assessments and method statements are sourced from your appointed subcontractors and reviewed to establish that they're suitable, sufficient and dovetail / support your own site arrangements
 - o subcontractors are aware of your expectations to maintain a safe working environment.
- **If subcontractors are involved**, review existing:
 - o pre-qualification requirements to establish the measures they're taking specific to assessing and controlling the risks associated with COVID-19
 - o the associated communication and training they're providing to their own employees / operatives under their control.
- **Consider staggered start and finish times:**
 - o to reduce people arriving and leaving at the same time
 - o to decrease the risks that may be experienced by those using public transport
 - o Is more than one appropriately controlled site entrance / exit point required to reduce pedestrian traffic?
- **Review and update site rules:**
 - o to reflect any changes and enhancements to be introduced
 - o ensure any amendments or changes are formally communicated to all site operatives (own employees, subcontractors and any temporary workers, including agency personnel).
- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site** including:
 - o all temporary works (including scaffolding, excavations, propping, shoring etc.)
 - o structures
 - o site accommodation
 - o perimeter protections
 - o utility services
 - o machinery / plant, materials
 - o any hazardous operations, emergency back-up systems and safety equipment to establish and correct any unsafe or abnormal conditions, such as damage, maintenance issues, leaks, faulty safety and emergency systems, improper housekeeping or storage, signs of vandalism or theft, water damage etc.

It's important to ensure that competent persons / contractors are appointed to complete inspection, maintenance, servicing, and repair work.
- **Review safety control arrangements for materials, plant, machinery and equipment procurement** so measures critical to health and safety can be maintained, including:
 - o cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
 - o welfare related equipment and supplies
 - o availability of PPE
 - o maintenance
 - o inspection (where external contractors are required for plant maintenance, electrical maintenance etc. are they available, can they get in when needed?).
- **Review emergency response procedures** to verify:
 - o they're up-to-date
 - o adequate coverage for assigned positions, including for example first aiders and fire marshals.
- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including:
 - o those of a statutory nature that may have lapsed since the shutdown. This could include utility services, machinery / plant, fire, security protection / detection systems and water management and detection devices. Further, check the following areas:
 - o inspection for signs of visual damage
 - o availability and selection of competent contractors to undertake inspections, testing, maintenance and repairs
 - o reinstating supplies (water in particular) in phases / specific areas (one at a time) if possible
 - o use of a 'water-watcher' to tour the site to check for leaks where water management devices are not provided
 - o inspection of temporary electrical installations pre-opening
 - o inspection of temporary works (places at height, excavations, structural supports etc.) by competent persons prior to re-opening.
- **Ensure work competence and capability of employees, subcontractors, temporary workers and agency personnel for the activities to be carried out** checking all:
 - o possess the necessary and appropriate skills
 - o have received appropriate information, instruction and training, and hold the correct and up-to-date certificates and licenses, where required.

Additional training programmes and / or certification, instruction, information and supervision may be required where there is an insufficient number of competent personnel with regard to your return-to-work-policy (where in place). This will help provide structure and a framework to ensure your personnel are 'fit for work' and consider issues such as mental health, well-being and physical fitness.



In reviewing the training arrangements and competency requirements, specific consideration should be given to the following:

- o Availability and responsibilities of key personnel:
 - Members of the senior management team, including Contract / project managers
 - Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
 - Site managers
 - Site supervisors
 - Site fire safety coordinators
 - First aiders
 - Fire marshals
 - Mobile plant operators
 - Appointed persons, supervisors and trained operators where lifting operations are involved
 - Trained slingers and signallers where required
 - Provision of sufficient site labour and cleaners to ensure that good housekeeping standards can be maintained.
- o Formal induction / re-induction:
 - all operatives and visitors (where permitted)
 - include specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19
 - consider the specific requirements of any vulnerable workers (young persons, new and expectant mothers, any groups identified as being at risk of severe illness as a result of COVID-19).
- o Other training needs:
 - expired tickets, certificates and interim measures - a number of trade organisations have sites indicating interim arrangements where training may have expired
 - familiarisation (site, plant and machinery for example) to be specifically considered, with returning furloughed employees and operatives potentially not having operated plant or been in a site environment for a significant period of time.
- o Training delivery:
 - requirements for social and physical distancing for example, are likely to impact the practicalities of training delivery, including induction and toolbox talks. This should be considered as part of the risk assessment process,



including available facilities, numbers that can be safely accommodated, duration, potential barriers to communication etc.

Remember to check with your broker to make sure you still have the right insurance cover in place.

- **Review your business continuity plan** including:
 - o supply chain resilience
 - o implementation and mitigation measures, to reflect any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary shutdown. Please visit our **business continuity** page for further support.
- **Further information and support is available:**
 - o **Allianz UK's risk management portal** and **Coronavirus resource hub**.
 - o useful trade sector links:
 - **Construction Plant Competency Scheme (CPCS)**
 - **Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)**
 - **National Plant Operators Registration Scheme (NPORS)**
 - **Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)**
 - **International Powered Access Federation (IPAF)**
 - **Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association (PASMA)**
 - **National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASSC)**
 - **Build UK**
 - **Driving for Better Business (fleet management)**