

COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR MOTOR FLEET



Re-starting your business 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 either scaled up or scaled down compared to the pre-shutdown period, there can be increased risk of:

- vehicle accidents / incidents
- breakdown.

These may be linked to challenges associated with reinstating vehicles that have been out of use for a period of time, reinstating drivers who have been away from the business and potentially, significant increased customer demand at relatively short notice.

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 reassessed and adapted. This may include:

- safe systems of work
- working procedures and arrangements for training and vehicle inspection
- cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
- maintenance and servicing.

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 your motor trade operations:

- **Observe and enforce COVID-19 workplace restrictions** in line with government regulations and guidance, including those relevant to:
 - social distancing
 - floor markings
 - digital rather than paper use
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - staggered working hours and breaks
 - ventilation
 - face coverings.

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)**.



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.

Specific considerations may include:

- arrangements for social distancing, including in vehicles; for example, avoiding multiple occupancy and preventing shared use
 - reviewing vehicle capacity where members of the public are carried (public service vehicles and / or taxis for example) to ensure social distancing requirements can be met. Investigate the practicalities of physical screening for additional protection to drivers and passengers but don't compromise safety
 - ensuring suitable arrangements for vehicle cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation whilst recognising potential touch points and the need for suitable PPE for anyone carrying out such activity
 - reviewing pick-up, drop-off, collection and delivery points and timings for customers
 - restricting the numbers of people involved in loading and unloading of vehicles
 - provision and maintenance of suitable ventilation
 - ensuring drivers have access to appropriate welfare facilities
 - use of pre-booking systems where instructions, capacity limitations and specific timings are communicated by phone or electronically
 - avoiding drivers having to accommodate paper or cash, with contactless or remote transactions used where practical
 - arrangements for refuelling of vehicles, recognising the touch points involved and the need for PPE (disposable gloves for example).
- **Review existing driving for work policies, driver safety handbooks and associated safe systems of work and risk assessments** to ensure they're relevant and that you're taking the appropriate measures to provide a safe working environment, safe vehicles and safe drivers. Where your business operations and activities have changed or the need for additional measures identified, review and update policies, driver safety handbooks and associated safe systems of work and risk assessments, sharing the results



and consequent actions with your employees (including agency personnel / other temporary workers), contractors and customers.

- **Plan sufficient time to reinstate vehicles and associated accessories and attachments** (including trailers) that have been taken out of use for a period. Give specific consideration to your supply chain and challenges that might be associated with reinstating a number of vehicles at the same time. This may include:

- organising statutory inspections where relevant
- maintenance and servicing (availability of spare parts may be an issue)
- MOTs.

MOTs should continue to be scheduled for an appropriate time to avoid potential issues, despite the extended period granted during the current pandemic. Specific guidance covering a range of driving and transport related topics can be found at the UK Government website.

- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including those of a statutory nature. It's essential that vehicles and associated accessories and attachments are safe before being put back into use, especially for safety critical features such as tyres and braking systems which may have been subject to periods of long inactivity.

- In-house checks and inspections should include:
 - tyres (including spare wheel and / or space saver) visually checking for damage, tread depths and checks on tyre pressures
 - brakes / braking systems
 - oil and coolant levels
 - evidence of rodent / other damage within the engine compartment / to wiring
 - windscreens and other glass (including wiper operation)
 - dashboard warning lights
 - external lights and indicators
 - sounders / horns / alarms
 - seat restraints and seat belts
 - door and steering lock systems
 - general body work
 - load restraints, guards, internal racking systems and other equipment, accessories and attachments
 - other safety features (reversing cameras, autonomous emergency braking, lane departure technology, telematics etc.)
 - emergency equipment and PPE (warning triangles, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, torches and high visibility clothing for example). Subject to the regulations and guidance provided by the government and others (see below), other PPE including gloves and masks or other face coverings may also need to be considered.

This isn't an exhaustive list and should be viewed in addition to requirements for maintenance and servicing and MOTs.

- **Review arrangements for cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation of vehicles** and the need for enhanced cleaning regimes, recognising the extensive use of plastics within most vehicles and the numerous touchpoints provided.
- **Ensure emergency procedures remain appropriate** and can be fulfilled through your supply chain, including vehicle breakdown and recovery services, tyre and glass replacement services and maintenance and servicing, for example.
- **Ensure your employees have the competence and capability for the work activities to be carried out** through the necessary skills, training and licensing requirements. Additional employee training programmes and / or certification, instruction, information and supervision may be required, where there is an insufficient number of competent employees, or new processes / machinery and plant require new skill sets. Refer to your return to work policy (where in place) as this will provide structure to ensuring your employees are fit for work, with mental health, physical fitness and wellbeing considered. It's important to recognise the potential mental health impacts of

the pandemic and how they could affect drivers.

In checking competence and capability, give consideration to:

- o communicating the results of the review of existing driving for work policies, driver safety handbooks and associated safe systems of work and risk assessments, ensuring that specific guidance and instruction has been provided regarding those additional requirements or changes in operation related to COVID-19. This may include social distancing, cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation etc.
- o vehicle familiarisation and other training for returning furloughed commercial drivers and less experienced drivers. Many people will have only driven a private car during their absence, and those that have only recently obtained their driving licences may need additional support
- o use of toolbox talks and / or further induction training to formally communicate any changes in policies, procedures, safe systems of work and / or risk assessments
- o highlighting risks associated with vulnerable road users is also relevant, with an anticipated increase in the number of cyclists and pedestrians if the use of public transport is discouraged. Cyclists and pedestrians may also have become used to lower

traffic volumes during the lockdown

- o reiterating the risks associated with fatigue, the importance of ensuring regular breaks are taken and the rules specific to drivers' hours (**Government**) for example. Unloading and loading times may have an additional impact particularly where multiple drops are involved.

Further support can be found on our [training](#) page.

- **Consider how and when to communicate to employees** regarding re-opening and re-starting procedures and associated expectations:
 - o can electronic / remote platforms be used to release initial communications before re-opening?
 - o use the first days of re-opening to communicate expectations, integrate employees back into their job role and activities, and assess any immediate training needs or other support that may be appropriate. Consider the potential impacts of a significant period of time away from work, with some employees likely to benefit from a gradual / phased reintroduction
 - o address maintenance, inspection etc. issues, and the practicalities of managing challenges relating to social and physical distancing for example before starting activities.

- **Review your business continuity plan, including supply chain resilience** and implement mitigation measures as appropriate, reflecting any changes to your business operation and lessons learned from the temporary or partial shutdown. Visit our [business continuity](#) page for further support.

- **Consult your insurance broker if you're considering alterations to any vehicles** in an attempt to comply with regulations and guidance relevant to social distancing. You can find specific guidance related to vehicle approvals provided by the [Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency](#).

Further information and support is available on our [risk management portal](#) and [Coronavirus resource hub](#)

See also [Driving for Better Business](#).

