

COVID-19: RE-STARTING YOUR MOTOR TRADE BUSINESS



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:

- fire / explosion
- machinery / plant damage or breakdown
- injury.

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 using different suppliers, keeping an increased level of stock, introducing different processes or procedures, changes in shift patterns and staffing, arrangements for receiving and

managing customers, cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation requirements for employees, premises based activities and vehicle, machinery and plant etc. Where these changes introduce new hazards or exposures, risk management measures, should all be re-assessed and adapted. This may include:

- safe systems of work / working procedures
- training
- cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
- fire and security protection system.

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:
 - travel to work
 - driving at work
 - welfare provision
 - cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation
 - social distancing
 - protective equipment (PPE)
 - staggered working hours and breaks.

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)**.



- **Review existing risk assessments and actions** including safe systems of work / working procedures to check they're relevant to your business' operation and that you're taking all the appropriate measures to ensure a safe working environment. This will include, but isn't limited to:

- o any employees who may be required to work offsite (vehicle and parts collection and delivery for example)
- o customers.

Where your business operations and activities are required to change, plans should be updated and careful consideration given to whether:

- new risk assessments should be completed and the results and consequent actions shared with your employees, customers, other potential visitors, contractors, and other occupants or users where premises are shared
- fire, security, water damage, traffic management 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:
 - o the scope of fire and intruder alarm detection, CCTV coverage and guarding
 - o opening / closing procedures
 - o vehicle / parts collection and delivery, including social distancing requirements and measures to avoid the need for signature requests (touch screen or written)
 - o adequate and suitable welfare facilities, including areas for safely changing and storing clothing and PPE. Where overalls and other PPE are provided, laundry arrangements should be specifically reviewed
 - o arrangements for customer bookings (MOT, service and repair) and receiving / returning vehicles, including for example:



- pre-booking and an appointment system where instructions and specific timings are communicated by phone or electronically
- designated parking
- key drop and return procedures
- pre-agreed collection times for customers
- electronic only payment transactions
- use of disposable seat, steering wheel and floor covers that are removed by the last person to exit the vehicle and safely disposed of
- use of disposable gloves that are changed at regular intervals (post work on individual vehicles and before and after any test driver)
- avoid customers needing to gain internal access to buildings where possible

- o controls specific to vehicle sales, retail areas (showrooms, forecourts, auction halls etc.) with primary considerations likely to concern:
 - social distancing (limiting numbers of customers onsite at any time, viewing by appointment only)
 - adequate welfare facilities for customers
 - removal of touch points where practical, for example,

- decommissioning of any vending machines previously provided for customer use, removal of vehicle brochures and other publications / replacing with digital versions)
- use of signage to highlight social distancing requirements
- one way pedestrian systems for employee / customer / visitor movement around the premises
- adequate staffing or security provision to manage customers
- physical barriers / screens (at reception areas for example)
- vehicle collection and delivery, completion of unaccompanied test drives etc.

- o arrangements for social / physical distancing may include:
 - thorough work planning to avoid close working
 - managing breaks and welfare provision / use
 - use of vehicles and plant / machinery / equipment
 - restricting customer and other visitor access
 - careful management of site meetings and training delivery
 - improved signage
 - physical barriers
 - PPE provision and use, for example.

- o IT and cyber security
- o continued support (practical and wellbeing) for any employees who continue to work from home.

Further support can be found on our [health & safety risk assessment](#), [safe systems of work](#), [fire risk assessment](#) and [cyber security](#) pages.



- **Develop and carry out enhanced workplace cleaning, disinfection and sanitisation programmes** both pre and post re-opening. Pay particular attention to communal areas and touchpoints such as washing facilities, toilet flush and seats, door handles and push plates, hand rails, office equipment, machinery controls and security features such as gates, barriers and bollards. If you're introducing alcohol-based hand sanitisers, remember they're flammable. Update your fire risk assessment, to keep your premises and people safe, ensure storage and use is clear of ignition sources (for example, electrical equipment, hot surfaces, smoking areas etc.) and ideally store within purpose designed flammable liquid cabinets, or otherwise, steel cabinets. Further support can be found on our [storage and use of flammable / explosive materials](#) page.

- **Undertake a thorough inspection of your site** including:
 - o all buildings (interior and exterior)
 - o forecourt / vehicle display areas and compounds
 - o utility services
 - o machinery / plant
 - o stock
 - o any hazardous operations, emergency backup 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 etc.

Our [equipment checklist](#) may assist you.

- **Review emergency response** procedures to verify:
 - o they're up-to-date
 - o adequate coverage for assigned positions on all shifts, including for example first aiders and fire marshals.

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

- **Plan sufficient time to recommission previously shutdown machinery / plant and processes** in line with all standard operating procedures (SOPs) and manufacturer's guidelines.
- **Complete and reinstate any inspection, testing and maintenance procedures** including those of a statutory nature that may have lapsed since the shutdown. This could include utility services, machinery / plant (for example, air receivers and compressors,

vehicle lifting equipment and forklift trucks, emergency systems, storage racking, vehicles, fire and security protection / detection systems etc. Our [equipment checklist](#) may assist you.

- **Review arrangements for cleaning and valeting customer and company vehicles** considering enhanced cleaning / disinfection / sanitisation options or removing cleaning and valeting for customers to reduce employee touch points.
- **Ensure work competence and capability of employees** 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 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:

- Availability and responsibilities of key personnel
 - o Senior managers
 - o Human Resources and Health, Safety & Environmental personnel
 - o Department managers / supervisors
 - o Appropriately qualified technicians and plant / machinery operators
 - o First aiders
 - o Fire marshals.
- Formal induction / re-induction
 - o specific expectations and controls relating to COVID-19 and any amendment to rules
 - o 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).
- Other training needs
 - o expired tickets, certificates and interim measures - a number of trade

organisations have sites indicating interim arrangements where training may have expired

- o familiarisation (site and plant 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.
- Training delivery
 - o 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.

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, 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?
- **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.

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:
 - [The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders](#)
 - [Retail Motor Industry Federation](#)
 - [Independent Garage Association](#)