COSLA

2 September 2020

HUMAN RESOURCE ADVICE 09-20

Waste Collection Services and Physical Distancing Checklist

This checklist is for use by managers, union representatives, and employees in Scottish Local Government waste collection services during phase 3 of Scotland's route map for coming out of coronavirus lockdown. It is intended to provide a checklist of items to consider and highlights existing guidance to refer to when considering measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of the Scottish Government, provided a phase 3 briefing to waste service managers on 30/07/08 and jointly to SJC union officials, waste managers and council HR managers on 13/08/20.

Key Points from Briefings

- It is important that risk assessments take into account the current local level of infection. This can be done in conjunction with your local public health team using current data supplied by Public Health Scotland.

- If the level of infection changes in the future a further reassessment may be required.

- The general advice remains: work at home if you can; if you can't work at home seek to maintain 2 metres physical distancing where possible; in the provision of essential services adopt appropriate additional measures where 2 metres separation cannot be maintained.

- Staff should not attend work if they have symptoms consistent with Covid-19 (https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-general-advice).

- Local guidance should be in place informing staff on what to do if they present at work with these symptoms.

Checklist – Regulatory, Governmental and Health Protection Sources

- Has the current guidance from the recognised regulatory, governmental or health protection source been consulted in considering a change to how services are delivered and the safety measures to be applied?

- Has a general risk assessment of the kind recommended by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) been carried out and shared with employees?

- Have individual risk assessments been carried out as suggested in Scottish Government advice where appropriate or requested?

- Have local safety representatives, employee representatives (unions), and individual employees whether in a union or not, been consulted on changes to service delivery?

- Mitigating measures adopted in the risk assessment should be central to working practices.

Additional Mitigations suggested by Jason Leitch, where 2m distance cannot be attained

- Maximising physical distancing within the constraints of the vehicle used and the number of occupants.

- Regularly cleaning of vehicle interiors, controls and handles. Note that if a single worker is the only person using a control or entering and exiting by a specific door cleaning will only be required at the start and end of a shift.

- Minimising the time spent in a vehicle (or enclosed space) for groups of individuals, for example, where parts of routes could be walked.

- Increasing ventilation, for example by partially opening windows. Consider if air conditioners or other ventilation functions in vehicles that will recirculate air can be reduced or switched off altogether.

- Reducing droplet production. For example, discouraging loud talking or shouting and by restricting the playing of loud music and radio.

- Providing and encouraging frequent use of individual hand sanitiser. (Where potentially contaminated surfaces have been touched.)

- Establishing 'crew bubbles' (i.e. small groups all working together as a team on a regular basis) are important. This is not to keep infection down but instead to make it easier to manage the Test and Protect protocol. By aiming to contain any transmission within a bubble it should help keep infection levels within a site as a whole down. If a waste operative tests positive, all close contacts will have to isolate. Accurate deployment records of crews working together should be kept and updated throughout the day if a change in crew is required.

- Vehicle occupants facing in the same direction where possible. (For avoidance of doubt, this does not mean drivers should not move their heads as required to operate the vehicle normally.)

- Face coverings. This is in line with existing guidelines on use of face coverings on public transport. Where someone is unable to wear a face covering for health reasons then further assessment should be carried out to decide if it is safe for them to carry out the tasks associated with their work. Further guidance on the use of face coverings is available from Public Health England (a link to which is in the links section at the end of the document). Where face coverings are unsuitable, consider face visor or face shield, though these provide a more limited level of protection.

- The key factor is the effectiveness of measures implemented in order to minimise the opportunity for droplets to travel.

- Take account of local circumstances.

Additional

- Health Protection Scotland Advice guidance: COVID-19 - guidance for non-healthcare settings.

The current version should be consulted for guidance on working arrangements including physical distancing and additional steps required where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- Where 2 metre separation cannot be maintained multiple mitigations, appropriate to the setting, may be adopted.

- Ensure that adopting a mitigation, such as using face coverings, does not cause a more proven mitigation, like regular cleaning, to be neglected.

Links

Working safely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (HSE)

https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/resources.htm

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance on individual risk assessment for the workplace (Scottish Government)

https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-individual-risk-assessment-for-the-workplace/

COVID-19 - guidance for non-healthcare settings (Health Protection Scotland)

https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/

Transport Scotland - A guide for transport operators in Scotland to keep their staff and those using their services safe

https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/transport-transition-plan/guidance-for-transport-operators/#63878

Public Health Four Nation Guidance – Working Safely during coronavirus (COVID-19) (Vehicles)

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles

UK Waste Industry information

The UK Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum (WISH) has published a detailed information note (3 August 2020) regarding COVID19 and waste-management activities based on government advice, industry experience and current knowledge and this has been endorsed by the Scottish Government. As well as providing information on general precautions and changes to waste management practices in response to COVID-19, it includes specific information in relation to working safely in vehicles.

https://wishforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/INFO-13-COVID19-and-waste-management-activities-issue-8-3-August-2020.pdf

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