



Ligtas

ENABLING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

COVID-19 Guidance for Clients



Introduction

Ligtas Consultancy and Training understand that these are uncertain and challenging times and our team are working hard to ensure we continue to deliver the necessary support to keep your personnel and businesses safe.

We are here to support you, as we know you will be under huge pressure within your organisations. So, as part of our partnership approach we have put together some tools to assist, as well as guidance on the issues to consider and action you may need to take.

Please be aware, the situation is constantly changing. Any specific guidance or instruction from the Government may change and you should always check the relevant websites listed within this document for the most current information and advice.

We are here if you need us. If you need further support on any aspect of risk management, you can contact Ligtas on 02922 800 000 or enquiries@ligtas.co.uk.

Wishing you good health and stay safe.

Ligtas Team

Current Government Guidance

Currently, the UK Government requires those who are symptomatic to self-isolate for seven days. If somebody in a household has symptoms of coronavirus, all other household members must self-isolate for 14 days. Keep up to date as government advice changes [here](#), and further advice on social distancing and protecting vulnerable people is available [here](#).

In addition to the serious health impact and strain on the healthcare services, COVID-19 is having a significant impact on businesses and the economy. Many business continuity plans are IT focused and therefore may not be enough to manage an ever-changing pandemic such as COVID-19. As a business wishing to maintain continuity the following should be considered:

- ✧ Where work can be completed at home, do so;
- ✧ Stay abreast of the evolving / escalating nature of this pandemic;
- ✧ Look at different operating methods;
- ✧ Can you offer new services;
- ✧ Communicate with stakeholders.

Be respectful of any client's wishes and if physical or face to face site work is not possible, respect this and seek an alternative approach if possible.

Any client allowing site work, must assess this with those providing the service and ensure the necessary protective controls are in place and implemented.



Identify the Risks

You must identify the risks within your business to ensure appropriate action can be taken to help control those risks. The below guides you through the areas you may need to consider;

✦ **Who is the most at risk from COVID-19?**

This includes the elderly, those with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease, and those who may have compromised or suppressed immune systems.

✦ **Travel**

Ask your employees about any private travel arrangements. Make sure that you know where people have been and when the last visit was.

✦ **What to do if someone identifies symptoms**

Ensure that you implement simple and straightforward arrangements for employees to tell you if they, or somebody in their household, becomes symptomatic.

✦ **Prevention**

Remind employees of the importance of washing hands, not touching their faces and minimising contact with others and to stay at home.

✦ **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

To help protect employees, consideration must be given to the provision of PPE.

✦ **Work at home**

Identify whether some or all work can be carried out remotely.

✦ **Risk assess homeworking**

Put in place simple and straightforward arrangements to make sure that those working at home can do so safely.

✦ **Loss of local services**

Identify where closure of local services such as schools will deplete your staff resources. Implement working at home, or whether work can be reallocated to facilitate employees with children working at home. Be fair and flexible.

✦ **Be prepared**

Have all emergency contacts available and all measures in place to enable those staff that can work from home can do so effectively.

✦ **Limit face to face meetings**

Minimise travel where possible and use online conferencing facilities if it is an option.

✦ **Shutdown**

Be prepared to shut down any offices so they are safe and secure for the period of vacancy. Contact your insurers.

✧ **Skeleton staff**

Where a physical presence is required in an office or other workplace is required, consider whether a rota system can be utilised to keep groups of staff separate whilst ensuring continuity of service. If there is any Lone Working this must be risk assessed.

✧ **Workplace cleaning**

Maintain best hygiene practice for cleaning and increase cleaning frequency to high contact areas e.g. handrails, door push plates etc. Additionally, have in place arrangements to clean your workplace thoroughly if a symptomatic person is identified to have been present for any time. Simple and straightforward guidance is available from the Government.

✧ **Foreign travel**

Identify work that requires foreign travel. Keep up to date with Foreign & Commonwealth Office (CFO) guidance on international travel from the UK and to specific countries. At present do not travel.

✧ **Key Personnel**

Ensure that deputies exist for key roles, with visibility of work required and projects in hand.

✧ **Vulnerable persons**

Identify whether some or all clients, customers and service users are from vulnerable groups. Consider whether special arrangements can be put in place to serve vulnerable groups separately.

✧ **Reduce the risk**

Consider whether the numbers of visitors to your site need to be reduced e.g. can a multi skilled member of staff be allocated the work.

✧ **Information**

In some circumstances it will be appropriate to question visitors about their travel and symptoms before admitting to your site.

✧ **Sanitising**

Put in place facilities for visitors to wash their hands at entry to your premises, and when moving through your premises.

✧ **Communication**

Communicate regularly and clearly with your clients about business continuity arrangements and update them as things change.

Working at Home Safely

As more employees are now likely to be working from home, you will need to consider the associated risks. The following should be carried out:

- ✧ A homeworking risk assessment;
- ✧ A workstation self-assessment.

You may also find it useful to provide your employees with online Display Screen Equipment Training.

Finally, encourage employees to keep in touch. Make use of messaging apps, video software or phone calls. This will assist in reducing the feeling of isolation and contribute to a positive mental health.

Ligtas has made the Mental Health Awareness e-Learning programme available free of charge to existing client to assist at this challenging time.

If you would like any further information or a copy of the above assessments, please feel free to contact us.



Health and Safety

It is important that you, as responsible persons and duty holders, continue to maintain in place the precautions identified within your Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Ligtas can support this through a remote compliance assessment.

If you do shutdown your buildings, it is important to ensure that all of the health and safety precautions are operational on re-occupation. Risk Assessment review frequencies can be lengthened in the circumstances, on a risk basis, dependent upon the findings of the prior assessment.

Whilst the building is shut down it is imperative that you consider all occupiers liability concerns.



Ligtas have prepared a separate Commercial Building Shutdown Guide and this is available on request.

Fire Safety

It is important that you continue to maintain in place the precautions identified within your Fire Risk Assessment. This includes ensuring that:



- ✧ Sources of fuel and ignition remain separate;
- ✧ The means of warning and detection continue to function;
- ✧ The means of escape and emergency lighting remain available;
- ✧ Passive and active systems for suppressing and controlling fire spread are maintained in working order.

If you do shutdown your buildings, it is important to ensure that all the fire precautions are operational on re-occupation. Ensure you consult your insurers.

Fire Risk Assessment Review frequencies can be lengthened in the circumstances, on a risk basis, dependent upon the findings of the prior assessment.

Ligtas have prepared a separate Commercial Building Shutdown Guide which is available on request and we can also support you with a remote compliance assessment.

Legionella / Water Hygiene

How to manage properties Hot and Cold-water systems

During this period building water usage should be monitored closely to ensure good water turnover is still occurring within the building. This could lead to areas which are not used so frequently being added to the weekly “infrequently used outlets flushing regime”. It is important to note that all maintenance tasks advised by ACoP L8 and HSG 274 Part 2 should be reviewed and maintained for buildings which are open or partially open. In a multi-tenanted building tenants should be contacted to ensure they continue to fulfil their legionella control obligations

How to manage properties Evaporative Cooling Systems

During this time evaporative cooling systems, if they are required for the building to operate or are needed for manufacturing purposes should be maintained as normal (as set out in ACoP L8 and HSG 274 Part 1). If staff who maintain these systems can't attend site there should be a contingency plan drawn up to make sure the cooling tower is fully operational and maintained correctly. It would also be wise to monitor stocks of chemicals more frequently to ensure these do not run out.



Cooling tower shut down

If the building is being shut down as a temporary measure, then shutting the cooling tower down should be reviewed. If essential maintenance cannot be completed on the cooling tower system, then the system should be isolated and drained down by following the site shut-down procedure for the cooling tower. When the cooling tower system is required in the future then the re-instatement procedure for the sites tower should be followed.

Ligtas have produced a COVID-19 Water Safety Update and this is available on request.

Planning for the Future

While work may quieten down or your employees are not able to carry out your usual work activities, you may want to use the current situation to think about how you can benefit the business ready for the upturn.

Whilst downtime is an issue, then this is an opportunity to carry out tasks such as the following:

- ✧ Review your health and safety policy;
- ✧ Review your risk assessments;
- ✧ Improve the competency of your employees by reviewing training requirements (especially via online training);
- ✧ Consider how your existing service offering can be delivered remotely or out of hours to mitigate risk;
- ✧ Familiarise yourself with government schemes available to assist with costs of furloughed employees, before deciding upon more drastic courses of action;
- ✧ Review actions from external reports;
- ✧ Record any learnings from this experience and how-to better plan for any future occurrences and emergency situations;
- ✧ Continue with your health and safety meetings or committees remotely.



Continuing Support

Whilst this is an unprecedented time for us all, essential property compliance and legislation is not suspended, and we must continue to maintain safe workplaces. This can still be achieved whilst following the current government guidelines. Where possible maintain visit schedules ready for the upturn.

Below are specific areas that need to be considered and additional ways that we can help and support your business during this difficult period.

Fire Safety

Legislation remains in force and fire risk assessments must continue if there is a significant change (e.g. reduced occupancy). As a SP205-1 Life Safety Fire Risk Assessment provider we adhere to the BAFE guidance.

By working together, we can determine the scope of work and carry out remote services.

This includes:

- ✦ Production of fire evacuation procedures where you have an existing fire risk assessment;
- ✦ Fire extinguisher surveys where floor plans are available;
- ✦ Development or review of fire safety manuals;
- ✦ Development of site-specific fire logbooks;
- ✦ Delivery of fire safety webinars tailored to your needs;
- ✦ Provision of online fire training;
- ✦ Advise in respect of safe building shutdown and re-occupation.



Legionella / Water Services

Legislation remains in force and risk assessment must continue if there is a significant change (e.g. reduced occupancy). Sampling will identify any issues within the water system, which may trigger a review of the written scheme.

By working together, we can determine the scope of work and carry out remote services.

This includes:

- ✦ Production of written schemes where an existing water risk assessment is available
- ✦ Delivery of water safety webinars tailored to your needs
- ✦ Development of site-specific water hygiene logbooks
- ✦ Online legionella training
- ✦ Advice in respect of safe building shutdown and reoccupation.



Health and Safety

Legislation remains in force and risk assessment must continue if there is a significant change e.g. reduced occupancy. There will be responsibility under the Occupiers Liability Act whilst buildings are vacant and you must comply with the requirements of insurers.

We can continue to carry out work that fits with social distancing policy. You may consider focus on external site risk assessments and/or external site disability access audits.



By working together, we can determine the scope of work and carry out remote services, including:

- ✦ Desktop document audits;
- ✦ Health and safety management reviews (including gap analysis, CDM Advice, migration to ISO45001 etc.);
- ✦ Health and safety policy creation and review;
- ✦ Health and safety Manual creation and review;
- ✦ Creation of task specific risk assessment suites;
- ✦ Creation of procedures e.g. Lone Working, Driving etc.;
- ✦ Vacant property inspections;
- ✦ Online health and safety training;
- ✦ Advice in respect of safe building shutdown and re-occupation.

Training

Whilst traditional classroom-based training is unlikely to continue during this period, other remote training options are available to help ensure that you remain compliant. This includes:

- ✦ **Virtual Classroom;** digital classroom space with a live tutor allows for two-way communication that can be accessed remotely. Our Virtual Classroom is bespoke to meet the needs of your business from our expert tutors.
- ✦ **E-Learning;** instant access to online courses which can be cost effective, quick and easy to both set up and use by employees working remotely. We have a wide range of e-Learning courses for studying online. Ranging from introductory awareness courses to professional health and safety qualifications, the Ligtas Learning Management System (LMS), allows you to study any time at your own pace. Our dedicated team of consultants will support you through your studies.



Our e-Learning courses have been developed by safety professionals with a wealth of experience in health and safety education. The courses are interactive with quizzes, knowledge checks and other activities to help develop and retain knowledge.

Further Information

We will continue to monitor Government advice and will update you as necessary.

Latest government advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

Need more help?

Please contact us if you have any further questions:

T: 029 22 800 000

E: enquiries@ligtas.co.uk

W: www.ligtas.co.uk

