

businesscompanion

trading standards law explained

Vehicles

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A COVID-19 Risk Assessment

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There is separate guidance for transport organisations here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-transport-guidance-for-operators>

Workers in this context are those for whom you are responsible under health and safety law. This means employees (full or part time, temporary or permanent) or a young person on work experience or an apprentice. Self-employed people are responsible for their work activity if it poses a risk to the health and safety of others.

Agency staff will be the responsibility of the agency who is providing the person to you up to the point at which the worker is introduced to you, after which, the worker is your responsibility in the same way as an employee.

Workers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

A COVID-19 Risk Assessment

Risk assessing a vehicle worker in relation to COVID-19 applies to what happens inside the vehicle as well as what happens when the worker gets out of the vehicle, i.e. what they touch and who they interact with.

You may employ vehicle workers each with different arrangements for their work. This is why it is best practice to involve workers in the carrying out of risk assessments whenever possible - it shows that you take their health and safety seriously.

Remember that the law requires you to:

- Consult with a recognised trade union, if there is one, or if not, a representative chosen by your workers, not by you. Share with your workers the results of the risk assessment. Write down your risk assessment if you have five or more workers.

Above all, make sure all workers understand COVID-19 safety procedures and keep people updated if things change

Here's a suggested hierarchy of measures for you to consider, in carrying out your COVID-19 risk assessment for vehicle workers.

1. Working from home and in the workplace (vehicles): By its very nature, workers who operate from a vehicle are involved in transporting something (i.e. themselves, goods or other people) from one place to another. These activities should all be considered as part of your COVID-19 risk assessment.
2. Stopping the activity: Are there any non-essential aspects that you can simply and legally stop doing, in order to reduce the risk? e.g. agree to deliver goods where only one worker or fixed pairs are needed for unloading, rather than larger teams. Or avoid tasks that require multi-occupancy vehicles if social distancing will be difficult to achieve.

Assuming 'working from home' and 'stopping the activity' are not feasible, then:

3. Social distancing: The objective here is to maintain a 2 metre gap between individuals whenever possible. If 2 metres cannot be achieved, then 1 metre plus risk mitigation is a viable alternative. This is an important control measure but one which is very difficult to achieve, given the inherent space constraints of vehicles. Consider the nature of the job from arrival, during the day, during breaks, interactions with others (including colleagues, customers and anyone else who might be encountered), the handling of goods, the journey home, unforeseen events and think about how the hazard of COVID-19 may present itself at each of these stages.
4. **Hand washing and surface cleaning:** Along with social distancing, cleanliness is the most important mitigating step and one which will be a part of your COVID-19 risk assessment for vehicle workers.

The steps you are likely to take, having considered the nature of the work and all who may be affected by it, are:

- Handwashing before using a vehicle and afterwards
- Hand sanitiser available for use in vehicles
- Cleaning vehicles in between shift changes/uses
- Special cleaning attention on door handles, fuel pumps, keys etc
- Adequate waste disposal of cleaning materials
- Signage to remind workers of good handwashing technique and avoiding touching the face
- Toilet facilities - available for use and cleaned regularly. Hand sanitiser/washing facilities provided
- Facilities (lockers, showers etc) - clear standards for use to ensure they are kept clean

See also the mitigating measures for inside and outside of the vehicle, later on in this annex.

5. Having taken all the above steps, are you confident that the activity can still go ahead, safely? If the answer to this is 'no' then you must stop this activity. Remember that your health and safety obligations to your workers mean that no-one is obliged to work in an unsafe work environment.

All of these scenarios present COVID-19 as a hazard and you must assess the risk presented by it and control that risk, in all the scenarios you are responsible for.

You must assess the risk presented by COVID-19 in all the scenarios of the job

Some of the main challenges are:

Lone workers: not having anyone to help if things go wrong

Workers who share a vehicle with other workers: not being able to adequately socially distance

Workers who collect and transport members of the public: the uncertainty - their knowledge of COVID-19 and their willingness (or ability) to behave appropriately

Many individuals working in a vehicle will be lone workers (e.g. couriers). In other circumstances there

might be two or more workers, required to work together as a team (e.g. refuse collection crews).

Some tasks might involve collecting or transporting other people, such as taxis carrying passengers or car dealerships offering test drives.

Think about any extremely vulnerable workers that you may have and how best to protect them

You are responsible for protecting the health, safety and welfare of 'other people who might be affected by your business' so this includes those who your worker might come into contact with, perhaps unexpectedly (passengers, customers, car park operators, members of the public, petrol station operatives, etc.) inside or outside of the vehicle.

Ensure those who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who live with someone with symptoms or who have been advised to self-isolate, stay home (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance>)

Remember that the wearing of face coverings on public transport is required in certain circumstances: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

A little note about PPE and face coverings:

If you already provide PPE for workers to protect them from health and safety risks at work (e.g. helmets, gloves, eye protection etc.), then continue to do so.

It is not recommended that you provide additional PPE (or face coverings) solely for COVID-19 reasons. This is because social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams (and other mitigating measures) are more effective.

There's more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles#vehicles-6-1>

The NHS's Test and Trace service needs your help! Keep a temporary record of your staff shift patterns for 21 days, in case it's needed to help contain outbreaks. More info is here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/maintaining-records-of-staff-customers-and-visitors-to-support-nhs-test-and-trace>

Remember that social distancing applies to all parts of the business, not just inside the vehicle, but break rooms and all areas where workers congregate.

Inside the vehicle

Lone workers	More than one worker sharing a vehicle at the same time	Collecting/transporting other people
Social distancing is not a problem within the vehicle	Insufficient space unless vehicle is very large	Insufficient space unless vehicle is very large

Lone workers	More than one worker sharing a vehicle at the same time	Collecting/transporting other people
		Unpredictable behaviour of customers
	<p>*Mitigating measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid multiple occupancy or shared vehicles where possible • Avoid shouting between occupants because this could increase the transmission of aerosols • Ensure good ventilation • Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning • Signage to remind of social distancing requirements • Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible • Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other • Using back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) whenever possible • Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed • Fixed teams or partnering (so each person works with only a few others) 	<p>*Mitigating measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure good ventilation • Avoid shouting between occupants because this could increase the transmission of aerosols • Signage to explain social distancing arrangements • Consider the needs of some customers, such as those who are hearing or visually impaired • Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning • Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible • Using screens or barriers to separate people from each other • Contactless payments

Outside the vehicle and during deliveries:

Remember that social distancing applies to all parts of the business, not just inside the vehicle, but break rooms and all areas where workers congregate.

- Stagger working hours to reduce crowding
- Single workers for loading/unloading where possible
- Avoid physical contact with another person when handling goods
- Provide additional parking or bike-racks
- Limit corporate vehicle sharing
- Keep workers to the same transportation routes
- Contactless refuelling and deliveries
- Electronic paperwork
- Plan for emergencies or new security risks that might involve vehicle workers and communicate any changes required. In an emergency social distancing guidelines don't have to be complied with if it's unsafe to do so, but immediate handwashing afterwards and reporting of the incident should be a priority.
- Look at pick-up and drop-off locations and signage
- Plan deliveries to a previously agreed area, perhaps click and collect
- Consider welfare facilities, their cleaning, ventilation and access.

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