

Environmental and Waste Management Group



June 2020 Newsletter

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Guidance and support continue to evolve through the pandemic and focus on supporting new ways of working as 'lockdown' measures ease; these remain exceptional circumstances and we must comply with our government advice on coronavirus at all times, noting in particular that there is significant variation in the approaches of governments within the UK and beyond. The following highlights some key guidance available at the start of June.

LATEST INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) continue to lead the UK government response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

You can get up-to-date information about [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and what you need to do](#) on GOV.UK.

Key guidance includes –

Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19)

[Guidance](#) applying to England to help employers, employees and the self-employed understand how to work safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

There is coronavirus information for people and businesses in:

- Scotland on the [Scottish Government website](#)
- Wales on the [Welsh Government website](#)
- Northern Ireland on the [nidirect website](#)

Public Health England – COVID-19 guidance: eighth update

On 28 May 2020, the UK government formally [launched the NHS Test and Trace service](#) whereby those testing positive for coronavirus in England will be contacted and requested to share information about their recent interactions.

The service is underpinned by increased availability and speed of testing, the establishment of a cadre of contact tracers, ranging from call centre staff to experienced public health specialists and coordinated work by local authorities, Public Health England (PHE) Health Protection Teams and the Joint Biosecurity Centre to identify and quickly contain localised outbreaks.

Four new or updated sets of public health guidance were published (as below) aimed at individuals, households, employers and employees, who have specific responsibilities under the NHS Test and Trace scheme –

- Summary of the NHS Test and Trace service – new [Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\) and PHE guidance](#)
- Updated PHE stay at home guidance – [guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection](#)
- New guidance on responding to putative out-of-household contact with COVID-19 cases – [guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection who do not live with the person](#)
- Workplace guidance for employers and employees – new DHSC guidance covering workplace precautions and employer and employee responsibilities: [NHS test and trace: workplace guidance](#). This includes an explanation of employers' obligations relating to workplace risk assessment that takes account of COVID-19.

IOSH INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

Information from IOSH on going back to work safely

With Covid-19 lockdown measures easing in many parts of the world, IOSH has created guidance on how businesses can ensure the reopening of workplaces is done safely – [iosh.com](#)

Other useful advice and information provided includes –

- [Legal obligations globally](#)
- [Risk assessments](#)
- [COVID-19 webinars](#)

SELECTED INDUSTRY AND SECTOR GUIDANCE

The **Health & Safety Executive (HSE)** website has the latest guidance and information for employers and employees [Health & Safety Executive – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): latest information and advice](#).

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, HSE has worked with others to develop [guidance about PPE \(personal protective equipment\)](#), continuing a position that there is currently no evidence that using face masks outside of a healthcare or clinical setting will protect people from coronavirus albeit from [15 June in England](#) face coverings shall be required on public transport as there is some evidence that they may reduce spread of infection from asymptomatic wearers and that they increase awareness of the risk and reinforce social distancing messaging.

British Standards Institution (BSI) guidance on safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic

Building on formal guidance issued by UK Government, BSI has developed a guidance document to assist organizations as they adjust the way they work, to protect workers and other people in their workplace from the ongoing risks related to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The document is not a formal standard, but a set of guidelines, developed at pace, using an agile process. The first version of the guidelines has been reviewed by an expert advisory group and BSI anticipates that the document will be revised frequently to reflect the dynamic situation, taking into account comments from users, government guidance, the level of risk and emerging knowledge.

The document can be downloaded [here](#).

BSI is also making available a range of COVID-19 relevant resources and updates on its [website](#), including a suite of best practice standards to help UK businesses.

Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum updated information note on COVID-19 and Waste Management Activities & example COVID-19 checklists

WISH (Waste Industry Safety & Health) forum has issued the latest update to its information note on [COVID-19 and waste management activities](#), along with a new reference document which provides [example COVID-19 checklists](#). As with the earlier versions the latest updates are summarised at the top of each section and the main changes include –

- Inclusion of references to track and trace
- Some expanded comments about flytips
- Updates to weblinks and references including links to guidance from the Devolved Administrations as well as HMG workplace advice documents
- The provision of checklists which can be used by employers and other duty holders to develop tools for the assessment of their COVID-19 arrangements and to monitor compliance with them.

OTHER NEWS

European Union launches green COVID-19 recovery package

The European Commission (EC) has announced plans for financial and economic support for member states to help them invest and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The package embeds climate action within the European Union's recovery strategy.

As with many economies around the world the COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating consequences. The EC estimates EU GDP fell by 15% in Q2 2020, and over the course of the year is expected to shrink by 7%. In a worst-case scenario, with a second pandemic wave, GDP could drop by as much as 16%. The Next Generation EU emergency recovery instrument provides €750bn of initial support alongside a reinforced multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. Combined with the €540bn package released in April to protect workers and businesses, the bloc's relief spending now amounts to €1.3tn.

The EC will designate some of the €750bn to efforts to drive the sustainable and digital transformation of the bloc. The EC said "investing in renewable energy and clean hydrogen solutions, clean transport, sustainable food and a smart circular economy... has enormous potential to get Europe's economy growing".

(Read more: environment-analyst.com, ec.europa.eu)

Greenpeace calls for investigation into the plastic waste industry

Greenpeace has called for an investigation into the plastic waste industry, following the findings of its latest The Recycling Myth 2.0 report. It says the investigation should look at the plastic waste industry with a focus on possible corrupt, fraudulent and illegal practices by exporting countries and local unlicensed operators.

Greenpeace says that plastic waste exports from the UK and other developed nations, "illegally dumped in Malaysia", have caused widespread environmental contamination. (Read more: circularonline.co.uk)

FUTURE EVENTS

Take the batteries out

According to Environmental services Association (ESA) member data, around a quarter of all fires at waste management facilities or in waste vehicles are caused by lithium-ion batteries that have been improperly disposed of. The ESA shall be promoting a national communications campaign to raise the issue of waste fires caused by high-energy batteries (particularly li-ion) and to encourage the public to dispose of them responsibly using available channels...

EWMG webinars

The EWMG is delighted to announce plans to hold a series of webinars over coming weeks and months on a range of topics that should be of interest to members. Watch this space and look out for committee mailer invitations in your inbox...