

Media Release

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HHIC issue advice to heating engineers on working during COVID-19 crisis.

The global pandemic COVID-19 has had unprecedented effects on the lives of us all. These are uncharted times causing untold uncertainty and fear amongst us all. The heating and plumbing industry carry out essential frontline work to maintain the supply of heating and hot water to UK homes, schools, hospitals and businesses. It cannot simply cease to operate.

Therefore, the heating industry has identified a number of actions that frontline engineers- who are currently still operating - can take to help protect themselves and their customers during the COVID-19 outbreak. These are based on Government recommendations, which change daily. HHIC will keep this page as up to date as possible.

Key considerations:

- When discussing an appointment with your customer/s, ask if they or any occupants are self-isolating, displaying any symptoms of COVID19, and/or have received a positive diagnosis
- Where the householders are not self-isolating, displaying any symptoms, and have not been diagnosed with COVID19, there is no reason not to undertake the planned work, whilst exercising general best practice in line with the latest Government guidance for the public: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

- If householders are, then there is a need to consider the nature of the work, and also the vulnerability of the householders. Additional precautions should be taken if the work is to proceed, which could include additional PPE, such as disposable overalls, disposable gloves, eye protection, and suitable face mask
- Government guidance is continually evolving, but be especially vigilant of those persons currently identified as most at risk, such as the over-70's, and/or with underlying health issues
- As well as protecting yourself, and householders, you should also consider the welfare of any colleagues, especially if they fall into one of the vulnerable categories.

Practical steps to take when working in the field:

- On the day of the work, call ahead to your customer to ask if they or any occupants have signs of the virus, have been diagnosed, or are self-isolating, and to check that they are comfortable with your visit to take place
- Explain to your customers what you will be doing, and why, and that you will need to maintain a safe distance from them (2m or 6 steps away is current Government advice), including when waiting for the customer to open the door.
- Do not shake hands with the customer or other occupants.
- Ask if the occupants can stay in another room, away from the work area(s) whilst the work proceeds, and with permission ventilate the work area where appropriate, e.g. by opening a window
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds, at the start of the job and after (also during the work). It is recommended to carry your own hand-towel with your equipment. Wash/replace hand-towel at end of each day/shift
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Wear suitable work gloves

- If you feel unsafe or at risk at any point, undertake a personal risk assessment and leave the premises if necessary. You can re-plan for a future date if appropriate, after ensuring everything is made safe.
- Customer/Engineer signature – is this required by the work?...can it be avoided, or an electronic copy can be sent on the day, or at a later date (use and/or sharing of pens, tablets or mobile phones may pose a risk of contamination/infection)

Job completion

- Wipe down any operational rubber gloves, tools and instruments used within the premises;
- Remove and place into a plastic bag any wipes, disposable gloves and overalls used, whilst trying not to cross-contaminate onto existing clothes or persons;
- Do not touch your face;
- Ensure you then clean/wash your hands, and where possible/appropriate any reusable PPE (e.g. safety glasses), using soap and water, or use suitable hand sanitizer on hands before moving to your next job
- At the end of each day and following the appropriate local waste regulations dispose of any bagged waste in line with any existing business process and/or Government guidance

***Note-** this guidance is to assist the business/individual. It does not form an official process.