



British  
Association  
of Landscape  
Industries

## **BALI Position Statement - COVID-19 (coronavirus)**

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Wayne Grills, BALI Chief Executive

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on the evening of Monday 23 March that saw the country effectively enter 'lockdown', the team at the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) has been working tirelessly to obtain clarification from the Government as to what this means in practice for our site-based members in particular, many of whom are looking for reassurances with regards to their careers and income.

It is an unprecedented time for us all and firstly I want to reaffirm the message that our members' health, that of their families and also those they come into contact with, comes first. Our request on Tuesday 24 March was for members to cease operations temporarily, stay home, stay safe and save lives. This was for a period of 48 hours. We would like to thank those members who took that request onboard, but at the same time recognise those who have had no choice but to continue working. During that time, we have continually requested clarification from MPs in both Westminster and in Scotland; 48 hours on, we are disappointed to have to report that we have received no reply. Therefore, our request was and remains that members close their businesses wherever possible to avoid the spread of COVID-19. This will go some way to help front line public services cope with the pandemic, including the NHS and police force, and protect our most vulnerable. This is absolutely critical, and the message could not be clearer; stay home, save lives. Ahead of this statement, the team and I have been working incredibly hard on developing several resources for BALI members to make use of if you do choose to close. These are listed at the end of this statement, including legal advice on furlough workers, with links to the relevant documents.

Government guidelines clearly state, however, that if you cannot work from home, you can go to work. If you are a business you may decide, or have

already decided, to continue operating. If this is the case, BALI strongly advises you follow and adhere to the most recent Public Health England (PHE) advice regarding preventative and protective measures. If you have chosen to continue working, and can meet the necessary required PHE standards, the team at BALI have produced a document that is available for members now, called '*Landscaping protective measures*', as well as a free RAMS template. This can be accessed via a link at the end of this statement.

I want to be absolutely clear here, BALI is not a regulatory or governing body and we cannot therefore dictate that you close your business down, but we are asking you to take a serious look at what part you are playing in either helping to contain this pandemic or whether you are taking unnecessary risks with your workforce and their families' livelihoods, and possibly lives. Employers have a statutory duty of care for people's health and safety, to provide a safe place to work, and this responsibility needs to be taken very seriously. There is also a moral responsibility to ensure employees feel safe and secure.

Many of our members have chosen to cease activity but are obviously extremely worried about what the implications of that decision will be for them, their businesses, staff and their families. We understand, and so do our membership benefit providers who are on-hand and ready to offer you support right now. On our website, we have a dedicated COVID-19 page containing essential information to help members throughout this crisis. This added service is on top of the provisions BALI members already have access to as part of their membership. I would encourage you to head straight to the website and familiarise yourself with everything that's on there. There's information about our HR helpline, legal assistance and a number of practical COVID-19 guidance documents and templates, as well as useful links to other supportive services.

Perennial is one such organisation that is offering a much-needed lifeline during this difficult time. The charity is ready to help with any difficulties you may be facing, whether they be financial or otherwise. Make sure you contact them if you're struggling. We've also just launched several new webinars covering digital marketing, to support businesses online whilst going to site may be difficult, or impossible. These webinars are exclusive to BALI members and are free of charge. We will also shortly be announcing several member clinics, also based online, that cover legal, HR, compliance and insurance. Details will be sent to all members very soon.

In the meantime, I will continue to press my contacts in Government for a much-needed response to our questions in the hope that we receive some clarity. If we do receive an update, the team will disseminate the information to all members immediately.

Please stay safe, protect yourself and others and together we will play our part in fighting this pandemic by supporting those services that need us now, more than ever.

**END**

**The following documents are available for BALI members only and can be found on the BALI COVID-19 portal [here](#).**

- Landscaping Protective Measures for COVID-19
- BALI RAMS-051 Rev O Coronavirus
- Furlough Employers to Employee Letter - BALI Template
- BALI Furloughed Worker Guidance

**Useful links:**

- [BALI Closed Members-Only Facebook Group](#)
- [BALI COVID-19 FAQ \(updated 26/03/20\)](#)
- [LISS/CSCS COVID-19 Impact](#)
- [BALI Webinars](#)
- [Perennial Support and Advice](#)
- [Government](#)
- [Public Health England](#)