



British
Association
of Landscape
Industries

BALI reaffirms its position on COVID-19 (coronavirus) following Government updates to guidelines for businesses in England

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On Tuesday 7th April 2020 the Government updated its [Guidance for employers and businesses about COVID-19: guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and [Social distancing in the workplace during coronavirus \(COVID-19\): sector guidance](#). These updates include changes which affect the way site-based businesses are permitted to work.

The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) has now completed its review of the documents, which apply for employers and businesses in England only. The team has extracted the salient information and outlined the relevant points below. BALI has provided comment on those areas where members may be seeking further clarification.

Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)

Social distancing in the workplace: The principles

- Workplaces to avoid crowding and observe 2 metre distance rule between employees where possible.
- Where it is not possible for staff to remain 2 metres apart, staff should work side-by-side or facing away from each other rather than face-to-face. **BALI** - [BALI reminds members of the need to adhere to best practice when undertaking operations which require staff to work closer than 2 metres. Heavy objects should not be lifted if the correct technique cannot be observed, and equipment according to training and manufacturer instruction only.](#)

- Where face-to-face contact is essential, this should be kept to 15 minutes or less wherever possible. **BALI** - BALI suggests the risks associated with face-to-face contact during landscape works originate not from the length of time workers spend in close proximity to one another, but the nature of the task and the posture required by the operatives involved. BALI expects the majority of face-to-face landscape works to involve lifting and/or physical exertion, resulting in accelerated breathing. BALI reminds members of the need to critically review working methods in light of the risks from COVID-19.
- As much as possible, keep teams of workers together (cohorting) and keep teams as small as possible. **BALI** - BALI reminds members and their employees of the need to allocate workers according to their skills, training and experience. BALI would encourage, where possible, teams to remain the same and suggest this practice may be implemented in conjunction with furlough periods.

Shift working and staggering processes

- Split across a day/night shift. **BALI** - BALI reminds members of the potentially hazardous nature of shift work, particularly where employees a) are not used to working during periods of darkness b) may be required to drive alone whilst tired c) when operating machinery with limited light. BALI also reminds members to avoid disruptive works near sensitive areas, particularly during a period when emotions amongst the general public are high.

Limiting spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in business and workplaces

- Posters, leaflets and other materials. **BALI** - BALI wishes to remind members of the importance of clear guidance with regards to new staff operating procedures, and of the need to record staff training as with any other health and safety training initiative.

Moving goods

- World Health Organisation (WHO) advises the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low, and risk of catching virus that causes COVID-19 from physical package very low.

Social distancing in the workplace during coronavirus (COVID-19): sector guidance

Construction

- If social distancing guidelines cannot be met in full, consider whether that activity needs to continue, and if so, take all mitigating actions to reduce risk. **BALI** - BALI reminds members of their duty of care to employees at all times. Members should aim to limit the risks associated with the task and from COVID-19 during this period.
- Keep staff 2 metres apart as much as possible. **BALI** - BALI reminds members of the need to adhere to best practice when undertaking operations which require staff to work closer than 2 metres. Heavy objects should not be lifted if correct technique cannot be observed, and equipment according to training and manufacturer instruction only.
- Minimise contact between workers and avoid skin-to-skin and face-to-face contact. Where face-face essential, limit to 15 minutes. **BALI** - BALI suggests the risks associated with face-to-face contact during landscape works originate not from the length of time workers spend in close proximity to one another, but the nature of the task and the posture required by the operatives involved. BALI expects the majority of face-to-face landscape works to involve lifting and/or physical exertion, resulting in accelerated breathing. BALI reminds members of the need to critically review working methods in light of the risks posed by the virus.
- Keep groups of workers working together in teams that are as small as possible e.g. vehicle crews working together rather than mixing crew members. **BALI** - BALI reminds members of the need to allocate workers according to their skills, training and experience. BALI would encourage, where possible, teams to remain the same and suggest this practice may be implemented in conjunction with furlough periods.

Outdoor businesses

- Guidance refers to commercial forests and other outdoor businesses
- If a 2 metre distance cannot be maintained, staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to face if possible. **BALI** - BALI reminds members of the need to adhere to best practice when undertaking operations which require staff to work closer than 2 metres. Heavy objects should not be lifted if correct technique cannot

be observed and equipment according to training and manufacturer instruction.

Advises workers who have to share enclosed spaces such as vehicle cabs should keep window open for ventilation and avoid touching own face at all times. **BALI** - [BALI suggests members avoid sharing vehicles due to the limited space between passengers in commercial vehicles and the limited time available to clean vehicles.](#)

- Encourages customer facing businesses to consider how to sell products/services without encouraging crowds. **BALI** - [Suggested solutions includes online/telephone orders and pre-packing orders for collection on site.](#)

Use of private vehicles and car-pooling

- BALI members have reported issues where employees could not use public transport or share lifts to work under previous guidance, which permitted them from working at the start of the pandemic. New guidance in this section suggests where individuals usually lift share for essential journeys (NOTE: cites getting to work as essential journey) with people who are not members of the same household, they should preferably walk/cycle/use public transport. Guidance now also states that, where the journey is essential and there are no other options, journeys can be shared with members of different households providing those journeys are shared with the same individuals and a minimum number of people.

The guidance issued above is for businesses/employers and employees in England only. BALI [published guidance for members based/operating in Scotland](#) on the 3rd April and there have been no further changes to guidance for [Wales](#) or [Northern Ireland](#).

Over the past three weeks, BALI has continued to keep its members and industry abreast of the latest developments related to coronavirus (COVID-19), including its own position statements which have also developed as new information is made available. The latest and most up-to-date documents, listed below, are available for members to download. These documents are designed to support businesses and provide clarity on topics related to COVID-19, including furloughing employees.

BALI's recommendation has always been, where you can close, to close, for the safety of yourself, your employees and those at home. Although BALI is a non-regulatory body and can only advise members, each business must make its own commercial decision on whether to continue to trade or not, with many already deciding on their course of action. With the help of the Government's financial support packages that have been outlined over the last few weeks, if you are able to furlough staff and temporarily cease activity, then BALI considers this to be the right thing to do. BALI has provided several guidance documents and templates through its [COVID-19 webpage](#) to support those businesses that have decided to furlough workers. BALI has also provided documents and support to those businesses who have had no choice but to continue working.

Where you can; stay home, protect the NHS, save lives.

END

The following documents are available for BALI members only and can be found on the BALI COVID-19 portal [here](#). You will need to log in using your BALI website username and password to access as these are locked down.

- Work Authorisation Letter Template
- BALI RAMS-051 Rev O Coronavirus
- Furlough Employer to Employee Letter Template
- BALI Furloughed Worker Legal Guidance
- COVID-19 BALI HR/Health & Safety Quest Guidance, including;
 - VAT Deferral
 - Furlough leave letter template
 - Job Retention Scheme FAQ
- BALI Business Impact Survey Results

Useful links:

The following documents have been updated and can be downloaded through the relevant links below, including BALI's FAQ series which is now split into three documents featuring questions and answers on a variety of topics.

- [COVID-19 BALI FAQ - Workforce Guidelines](#)
- [COVID-19 BALI FAQ - Government Business Support](#)
- [COVID-19 BALI FAQ - Contractual Guidelines](#)

- [COVID-19 BALI Scotland update from BALI Chief Executive](#)
- [COVID-19 Open letter to BALI Members from BALI Chief Executive](#)
- [COVID-19 BALI Landscape Site Operating Procedures - Protecting your Workforce](#)
- [COVID-19 BALI Guidance for the Self-Employed](#)
- [COVID-19 BALI Guide to Apprenticeships](#)
- [LISS/CSCS COVID-19 Impact on Applications](#)
- [Claim back wages with the Government Job Retention Scheme](#)
- [BALI Webinars](#)
- [BALI Closed Members-Only Facebook Group](#)
- [Perennial Support and Advice](#)