

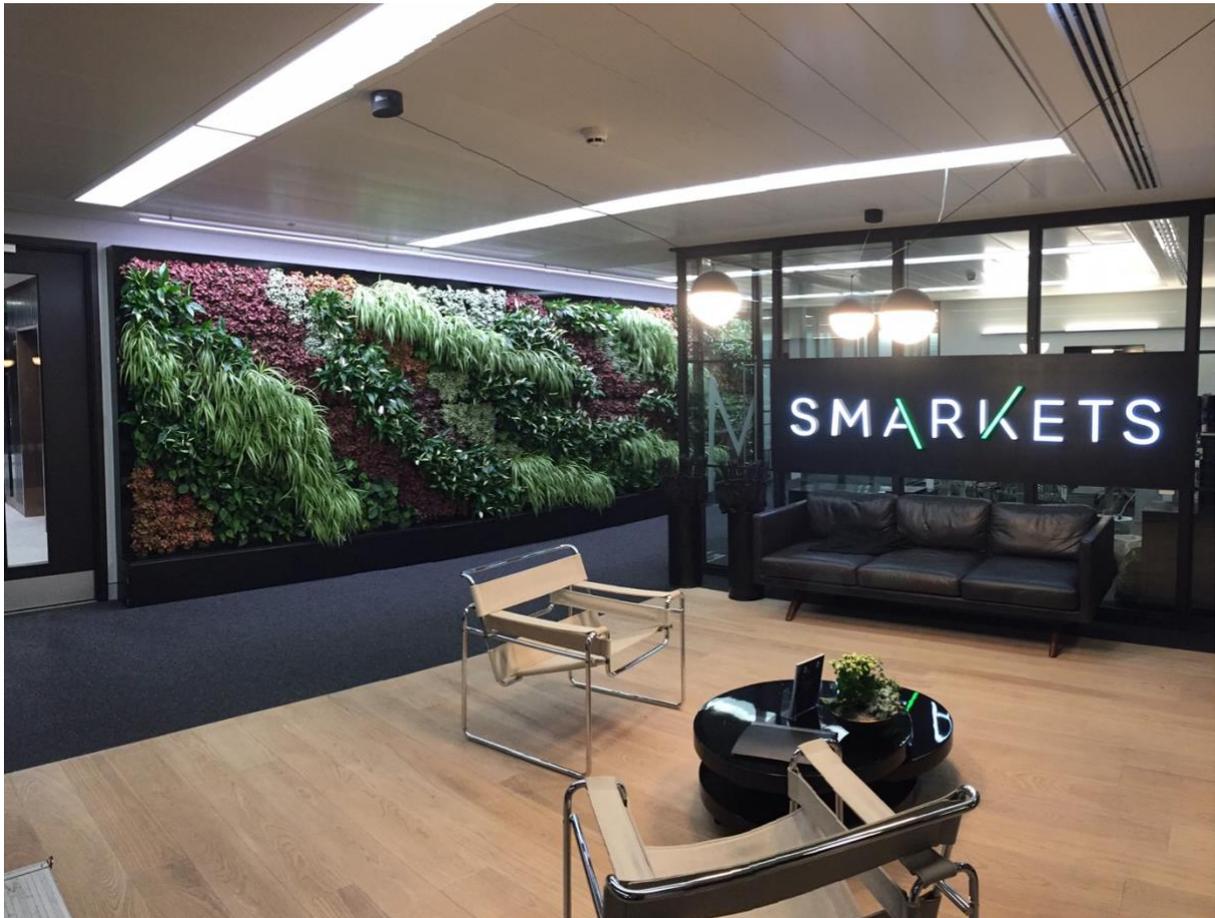


British
Association
of Landscape
Industries

Interior Landscaping: Operating Procedures

Protecting your workforce

July 2020



Interior landscaping operating procedures: protecting your workforce

The law requires employers to identify the hazards associated with their business operations, assess the risk associated with each of these and implement working practices to manage them.

As restrictions on movement and business operation ease following COVID-19, employers have a duty to ensure the working environment and the new way in which employees operate is safe for all members, regardless of role, ability, or location.

Work operations are likely to be different to those before COVID-19, and employers have a duty to ensure the risks associated with this new way of working are assessed and measures implemented to ensure the continued safety of their employees.

As with all health and safety in any other context, employers must consult their staff regarding measures implemented to manage the risks associated with COVID-19. Of course, any business with more than 5 employees must record the findings of these risk assessments.

Engaging with and reassuring staff is key to ensuring staff return to work eagerly, and employers must accept that short, medium, and long-term adjustments to working may be required. Staff confidence is likely to originate from them being engaged with measures that seek to ensure their wellbeing throughout the working day.

The guidance contained within this has been developed by the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) to meet the needs of the landscape industry. It is based on the third version of the Site Operating Procedures (SOP) issued by the Construction Leadership Council, and also aligns with guidance published by the government in the *Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work* document and *Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus* document, produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Companies should ensure their health and safety professionals and representatives have the skills, training and knowledge to understand the risks associated with COVID-19. Where companies and their workforce do not have access to these skills in-house they should together explore external support options to put in place appropriate mitigation measures, for example through their trade association, health and safety consultancies or trade union health and safety representatives. All can help companies understand the risks associated with different activities and situations within individual companies and offer the support managers and workers may require.

As the Test and Protect initiative rolls out, all workers should continue to follow health protection advice to isolate either themselves or as part of their households should anyone in the household exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. Advice within workplaces should continually remind people of the symptoms to look for and clear advice be provided on how to respond should symptoms become apparent at work. Advice for employers on helping staff who need to self-isolate is also available.

This guide should be used alongside other advice to help you decide on the actions to take. In addition to the measures outlined in this document, which aim to protect against the spread of COVID-19, all landscape activities must continue to comply with existing health and safety regulations.

As with the risks associated with any other work task, the risk posed by COVID-19 must be managed to the lowest reasonably practicable level. The ideal order to follow when reducing risk is outlined below, together with suggested considerations.

1. Elimination

- It is not currently possible to eliminate the risk of COVID-19 from a client site-based work environment. Only working remotely from home will eliminate the risk of spreading infection to stakeholders and employers should take every possible step to facilitate home working.

2. Substitution

- Workers who are unwell or displaying symptoms should remain at home (see *Before leaving the house* section of this document)
- Prohibit all non-essential visitors to site
- Reorganise tasks so they require one person to complete

- Increase hygiene throughout working day (See *Office, yard and communal areas* and *On site* sections of this document)
- Practice social distancing at all times
- Essential physical work requiring close contact between workers should be undertaken with controls (see *On site* section of this document)

3. Engineering control

- Use additional tools, equipment and vehicles to avoid close contact between workers (see *On site* section of this document)
- Install temporary barriers in vehicles
- Install temporary barriers around works areas to

isolate employees from third parties

4. Administrative control

- Enforce strict hygiene measures including frequent hand washing
- Prohibit sharing of PPE between employees
- Train workers via toolbox talks, meetings, posters and other information
- Re-schedule visits to avoid conflict with client working hours
- Encourage cohorting/co-teaming (and maintaining same team members to minimise potential for spread)
- Implement designated access and egress points for enclosed areas (See *Office, yard and communal areas* in this document)
- Use signage and floor markings to remind stakeholders
- Use one-way systems in enclosed areas

5. Personal protective equipment

- PPE worn to prevent COVID-19 infection must not interfere with task-specific PPE
- Operatives may wish to wear 'face coverings', as defined by the government in their document:
<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>
but should note these are not a substitution for effective hygiene measures or physical distancing, and that incorrect use may lead to greater health risks
- Use of 'face coverings' is not a substitution for a FFP3 face mask

It is important to review the risk posed by COVID-19 regularly. Guidelines and lockdown restrictions may change, and it may be necessary to revise plans as the pandemic develops.

Before employees return to work

Hold conversations with staff before they return to work, to discuss plans with them and outline the measures taken by the company to reduce the risk from COVID-19.

Follow this conversation when staff return to ensure they understand the measures and record the details of this and any training you undertake.

Before revisiting client sites

Liaise with clients regarding the measures your business is taking, but also to identify restrictions imposed by your client which may require consideration

- Check client buildings are open to your operatives and that the works planned can proceed
 - Consider staggering work shifts or visits to sites if multiple operatives are required

- Consider completing works out of client operating hours

Before employees leave the house for each shift

Any employee who meets one of the criteria below should not attend work and instead follow guidance on self-isolation:

- High temperature, a new, persistent cough or a loss/change to your sense of smell or taste
- Waiting for a coronavirus test result
- Have tested positive for coronavirus
- You live with someone who has symptoms, is waiting for a test result or has tested positive
- Is vulnerable by virtue of their age, underlying health condition, clinical condition or are pregnant. Follow the link below to identify individuals who are at high risk:
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

[19/advice-for-people-at-high-risk/](#)

Office, yard and communal areas

- Clearly communicate procedures and policies surrounding COVID-19 to employees
 - Keep a record of staff who have been notified of new procedures
 - Use signs and notices to reinforce staff responsibilities
- Frequently clean bathrooms and wash facilities. Clean using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Identify common contact surfaces (e.g. Office doors, desks, printers, screens, keyboards, gates, intercom buttons, fuel pumps/bowsers) and ensure these are regularly cleaned
 - Implement measures to monitor compliance

- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied each day

Driving

- Aim to limit one occupant per vehicle
- If sharing a vehicle is essential, consider implementing the following:
 - The same individuals to share vehicles each shift
 - Driver and passengers to wash hands with either soap or hand sanitiser before entering and after getting out of the vehicle
- Maintain good air circulation in the vehicle
- Frequently clean vehicles with sanitiser, paying attention to all hard surfaces in vehicles (steering wheel, dashboard and door handles etc). Only use sanitisers which contain

at least 60% alcohol (not baby wipes)

- Discourage the purchasing of food and drink from supermarkets and garages whilst travelling between site(s). Encourage the use of meals and drinks prepared at home.
- Pay attention to hygiene when refuelling vehicles at external sites
- Consider how colleagues who fall ill during work hours will be taken home

On client sites

- Where possible and safe, have single workers on client premises. Where this is not possible, encourage cohorting or a fixed pairing system. Where jobs require repeat visits, allocate the same workers to a client
- Minimise contact with third parties during delivery of materials to client sites
- Minimise contact with common touchpoints

such as intercoms, keypads, turnstiles and lift buttons during visits

- Encourage hand washing on arrival, before meals, at the end of the day and after removing gloves, masks and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Review induction and training procedures
 - Hold events outside of buildings where possible
 - Ensure social distancing guidelines are adhered to
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging or close contact
- Maintain a 2-metre distance between each employee as well as clients
- Cease non-essential physical work requiring close contact between workers (e.g. two-person lifting or loading)
- Essential physical work requiring close contact between workers should

be undertaken with the following controls:

- Reduce weight of load where possible (i.e. smaller quantity or fewer items)
- Using lifting equipment
- Encourage the use of physical working partners/cohorting
- Be mindful that some workers may become lone workers as a result of measures taken to ensure social distancing. These employees must be managed appropriately and in accordance with a lone working policy
- Employees should not share phones, tools and equipment
- Staff should avoid collecting a signature at the end of any works
- Staff should not consume food or drink whilst on client premises and decline offers made by staff
- Face coverings must not be considered a replacement for correct PPE
- Frequently clean with sanitiser all equipment and frequently touched surfaces
- Limit tools and equipment to individual employees if possible
- Provide adequate soap/sanitiser, single use towels for each shift
- Promote the importance of wearing gloves for duration of visit to client site
- Do not share PPE, especially masks and respirators and anything that comes directly into contact with skin
- Clean reusable PPE after each use according to manufacturer instruction
- Safely discard any contaminated or single use PPE
- Store all PPE in sealed containers and only open new PPE as needed

PPE and equipment

- Install temporary barriers around works areas to isolate employees from third parties

Site-based hygiene and toilet facilities

- Where employees previously had access to site or client toilets, ensure this remains available considering current pandemic.
 - Where site-based facilities are no longer available, ensure suitable alternatives are available nearby.
- Provide equipment for site-based hand washing facilities where facilities are not available
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are not available. Note that hand sanitiser does not work as well on sweaty, greasy or visibly dirty hands, and it is necessary to cover the entire surface of your hands with sanitiser.

If an employee develops symptoms including a high temperature or a persistent

cough whilst at work, they should:

- Return home immediately
- Avoid touching anything

Employees must follow guidance on self-isolation: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Useful links

Health and Safety Executive guidance:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/working-safely-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm>

Government document: Working safely during COVID-19 in construction and other outdoor work

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb961bfe90e070834b6675f/working-safely-during-covid-19-construction-outdoors-110520.pdf>

HSE: Talking with your workers about preventing coronavirus

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/assets/docs/talking-with-your-workers.pdf>