

1st May 2020

Briefing Note

CECA Scotland Member Briefing:

COVID-19 - CECA SCOTLAND UPDATE

Introduction

CECA Scotland will be producing regular updates to keep member companies updated on new developments relating to the Covid-19 coronavirus and its impact on the Scottish civils sector. This briefing will be delivered daily and posted on our website. If you would like further information or to share your experiences about how COVID-19 is impacting on your business, contact our Chief Executive, Grahame Barn: 07976 199615 or grahame@cecascotland.co.uk.

COVID-19 Construction Sector Guidance: UPDATED TODAY

The Scottish Government have today (1st May) updated [guidance](#) on construction sites and associated works that can continue under specific conditions. The guidance, which should be read together with the Scottish Government's [business and social distancing guidance](#), provides further information to help businesses determine what constitutes 'essential' work that may be able to continue. No non-essential work should continue at this time.

Where construction sites are closed, the Scottish Government **urges business to utilise all** available support measures to protect the jobs and incomes of construction workers.

Non-essential services

Work on construction in the following sectors should be halted (subject to limited exceptions):

- domestic housing
- schools, further and higher education institutions and early years provision
- office buildings and other commercial properties
- leisure
- retail
- warehousing
- garages and showrooms
- justice and custodial
- ecclesiastical
- community centres
- non-health related civic buildings
- public realm - hard and soft including (but not limited to) roads, which includes footpaths, footways, cycle lanes and verges; pavements; parks; and grassy areas

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Companies should put in place suitable arrangements for monitoring site security and safety, and personnel may be allowed on-site to carry out essential remedial work in line with existing contracts, or in the light of urgent work emerging.

Essential projects

The Scottish Government is applying the following guidelines in determining whether a project falls within the definition of 'essential'. Essential projects include:

- Projects to create or repurpose facilities which will be used directly in COVID-19 related activities including testing, containment, treatment, research, vaccine production, protective equipment manufacture, other key medical supplies, and other related activity, including supply chains.
- Projects to create or repurpose facilities which will be used to accommodate key workers or free-up space in facilities to be used directly in COVID-19 related activities as above.
- Projects to create or repurpose facilities and infrastructure critical to the national response to COVID-19 including food production, distribution and digital communication, where these facilities are likely to be completed and operational within 6 months.
- Projects which are considered essential public services, or which will provide wider resilience and capacity across essential systems (e.g. which strengthen security of fuel and energy supply).

Examples of essential projects (further details in the guidance [here](#))

- **Essential and time-critical maintenance and repairs**
- **Operation and essential maintenance of the transport network**
- **Essential road works and works for roads purposes**
- **Energy: critical maintenance, energy network replacement etc**

However, any such project can only continue operating if it can comply with the guidance on the safety and welfare of the workforce and the public. **Any site unable to meet these requirements must cease operations.**

Compliance and future development

While the guidance extends until further notice, it also begins to develop a route-map towards restarting activities within overarching public health considerations.

In recognition that the public sector is a major client group for the construction sector in Scotland, the Scottish Government has set down guiding principles in managing this situation through existing public sector construction contracts to ensure Scotland retains a viable construction sector through

For more information please contact Grahame Barn on grahame@cecascotland.co.uk

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these unprecedented times and that businesses emerge ready to resume work on existing projects and new opportunities.

Route to Recovery - First Steps

- Public sector contracting authorities should continue to progress pre-procurement activity, and progress to procurement where it is clear industry can respond, assisting suppliers to plan for, and schedule, full recommencement of operations as soon as practicable.
- The Scottish Government is developing plans to address the wider issues needed to get the industry restarted again. These are likely to include the easing of restrictions in a phased manner, opening different parts of the sector, considering different restrictions in different areas dependent on how the pandemic is progressing. All of this will be evidence led.
- On easing restrictions, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other critical behaviours will still be essential in each area to ensure public and workforce confidence.
- The Scottish Government are working with business and employee representatives, seeking to learn from successful working practices on essential sites, looking for industry to develop innovative processes to support new ways of working, and also learning from examples from around the world.
- The Scottish Government will work closely with Health Protection Scotland to ensure that the health and wellbeing of individuals continues to be our priority.

The Construction Guidance will be updated and reviewed as required in consultation with the sector's employers and unions. To read the guidance in full, click [here](#).

New BEIS Webinar: Managing your business during coronavirus

BEIS are running a webinar at 11am on Thursday 7 May to find out more about managing your business during coronavirus with guidance on reporting, regulations and tax. The webinar will cover:

- Right to work checks
- Filing reports and accounts
- Tax - Time to Pay scheme

You will have the opportunity to ask questions during the webinar. Register [here](#).

Skills Development Scotland Employer Update

Skills Development Scotland have produced an update for employers which you can access [here](#). It lists all their employer support available at this time, including support for apprentices, details of online courses, redundancy help, the SDS recruitment hub and business support.

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Webinars to support your business

UK Government departments are hosting a series of free webinars to help businesses understand the support available including:

- Tuesday 5 May - [Financial support for small businesses during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- Wednesday 6 May - [COVID-19: Impacts and changes to International Trade](#)
- Thursday 7 May - [Managing your business during coronavirus: reporting, regulations and tax](#)
- Multiple dates - [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme - How to make a claim](#)
- Multiple dates - [Coronavirus COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme](#)

Keep up to date with all the latest available UK Government webinars [here](#).

Treasury cut taxes to reduce PPE costs

From 1 May 2020, PPE purchased by care homes, businesses, charities and individuals to protect against COVID-19 will be free from VAT for a three-month period. Find further information [here](#).

Scottish Government Advice

The Scottish Government's latest COVID-19 advice for businesses can be read here: <https://findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/coronavirus-advice>. For issues not dealt with on the website, call the Scottish Government [Helpline](#) on 0300 303 0660.

HMRC Tax Helpline: 0800 024 1222, open 8am-4pm, Monday to Friday.

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