

Onshore and Offshore Wind Operators, Developers,
OEMs and Contractors

Reference
COVID- 19

Date 24th March 2020

Dear Sirs

Ensuring the health and safety in the Renewable Wind Energy Sector during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Government has announced further restrictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including that persons should work at home unless they are a critical worker, which will include the electricity sector. During this period of time it is important that the health and safety of the workforce is not compromised.

Therefore, I am writing to you and other key stakeholders to remind you of your continuing duty, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of persons at work (and others who may be affected by your work) at your wind farms is maintained.

I have been contacted by a number of people within the industry and have provided a response on such matters as statutory examinations, initial and refresher training, and emergency response arrangements. Under certain circumstances with the agreement of a suitable competent person, some legislation does allow thorough examinations/statutory inspections to be postponed to a later date. Even if such options are taken, it remains the duty-holders responsibility to ensure that the equipment is safe to use. In addition I would ask you to review the following:

- Your emergency response arrangements and particularly for self-isolation given the emergency services, including HM Coastguard, will only respond to serious cases of COVID-19;
- Individual competence for work at height must be assessed prior to extending the period between refresher training;
- If construction work is stopped that you have taken steps to make any structures or excavations safe, to secure any machinery, and to prevent unauthorised access to the site.

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- When key individuals are not available then alternative arrangements are provided to ensure suitable management and supervision of work.

I have attached the link to guidance on the HSE website on the COVID-19 for further information

https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner

While these restrictions are in place HSE will only visit sites for the investigation of serious incidents or concerns. We will contact you in advance to ensure there are necessary arrangements to ensure our own health and safety. However, my colleagues may contact individual duty holders to discuss the provision of suitable health and safety arrangements.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Johnson
HM Principal Inspector of Health and Safety