

SITE VISITS AND FIELDWORK DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The purpose of this guidance is to assist members if they have to make a decision regarding undertaking site visits or field work while a pandemic has led to restrictions on public movement and activity.

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About this guidance

- 1.1 The purpose of this guidance is to assist members in making decisions related to site visits or field work during the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions on public movement and activity.
- 1.2 This guidance has been developed by a working group of the Technical Committee and has also been informed by inputs from a number of member sources. This version was approved by the LI Technical Committee on 18th April 2020 following support from LI Board Officers from their meeting on 16th April 2020.
- 1.3 This guidance may well need to evolve and the latest version should be sought out. Member feedback on the guidance, in use, will be welcome. Please send comments to technical@landscapeinstitute.org.
- 1.4 Accompanying this guidance is contextual information on the Landscape Institute website which will need to be referred to in order to correctly interpret this guidance and the LI's overall position.

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Decision in principle

- 2.1 Firstly, LI members are reminded that the latest national / devolved government guidance will always take precedence. Members should be aware that different advice (in some cases mandatory) is issued by the different national governments. Members should therefore refer to the relevant official sources applicable to actual locations of work.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of members of the Landscape Institute to form a judgement if site visits or some fieldwork are necessary for their practice in accordance with the relevant sources and contextual information referred to above.
- 2.3 The decision as to whether to carry out fieldwork/site visits or not must then be documented explaining the basis on which the decision is made, and this should be done on a case by case basis.
- 2.4 If a site visit or fieldwork is necessary there are some measures that should be taken to reduce risk and these are now introduced.



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Risk assessment and management

- 3.1 Once a decision to undertake some site or field work has been taken and justified, a full risk assessment should be carried out. The risk assessment and management approach should demonstrate that the worker(s) can depart, arrive, work and return to base with negligible effect on themselves or on any third parties.
- 3.2 This approach needs to address both risks to the health and safety of the worker and anyone the worker might foreseeably come into contact with, and also risks to the reputation of the practice and profession. The following are recommended as components:
 1. A full understanding of the specific issues and regulations around COVID-19 as well as staff employment contracts and definitions of vulnerability;
 2. An understanding of and competence in the practice of risk management;
 3. An evaluation of risks and control measures relating to the person(s) undertaking the site or fieldwork when travelling, fuelling, working, taking breaks (including bathroom), and cleaning up afterwards;
 4. An evaluation of the risk and control measures relating to the worker potentially spreading the virus including in the event of any breakdown of equipment or vehicles or accident which could occur associated with the site or fieldwork which would require shopping or draw on already scarce resources (e.g. breakdown or emergency services);
 5. Coverage of standard health and safety procedures, but also in the specific context of COVID-19 e.g. noting that lone working, where permitted, may present increased hazards due to the lack of informal supervision. (It may be necessary to update lone working policies);
 6. Specific attention to how working on site or in the field may be perceived by others who are concerned to see social-distancing and self-isolation enforced and the potential for this to have substantial reputational effect on the profession once represented via social media;
 7. It is also recommended that in the context of heightened anxieties amongst many landowners, land managers and farmers about the potential risk to their workers and families, the landscape practitioner should be particularly diligent about the considerate use of rights of way and courtesies when entering onto land. Some sites may currently require special permits (in addition to CSCS cards).



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Control measures

- 4.1 It is strongly recommended that members consider thoroughly if alternative methods of working would allow progress with the project to be made at a lower risk. This could for example be subcontracting some of the work to a more locally-based contractor or consultant (obviating travel), using Internet-based information as far as possible to minimise time required on site, and agreeing to postpone as much site and field work with clients as possible. These will all reduce the scale of operation requiring novel risk management.
- 4.2 If work is subcontracted members should ensure that similar standards to those set out in this guidance are cascaded through contracts.
- 4.3 Regarding the remaining risks and control measures, the following pointers are highlighted. Please note this is not an exhaustive list. It is solely intended to assist individual thought processes:



General

- 4.4 Each site and work operation will generate its own risk profile and should be considered as an individual case; risk assessments should not be copied across instances. Thorough preparation ahead is required.
- 4.5 The *current* government guidance for outdoor working must be followed. This is rapidly evolving and is found in different places on the gov.uk website.
- 4.6 In addition, the latest guidance available from the UK's **Construction Leadership Council** (CLC) on site operating procedures may be helpful in a number of respects within the UK and should be reviewed alongside **BuildUK** guidance and guidance from **HSE** to identify other considerations not included below.
- 4.7 The guidance issued to other professionals and contractors (e.g. BALI, CIEEM, AA) should be referred to as necessary and certainly if different practitioners will be working together.



PPE & Hygiene

- 4.8 Employees should be provided with appropriate PPE including hand sanitisers and gloves (and possibly masks) as indicated by government guidance.
- 4.9 Having strong measures in place to promote good hygiene is paramount. It is widely accepted that all staff should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more and more frequently than normal. As many public toilets are closed, consideration needs to be given to this aspect. It is important to check what facilities will be available on sites. (The expectation is that the site should be providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available).
- 4.10 Allow frequent breaks to attend to hygiene requirements.
- 4.11 The capacity to sanitise site and countryside furniture (e.g. gates/stiles) and equipment (especially where laid down for other workers to pick up) may be necessary before and after use.





Travel

- 4.12 Staff should travel equipped with shareable copies of written authorisations which clearly justify the need for the travel and the work being undertaken. Where relevant these should include information from the client which explains the commission being undertaken. The authorisation will need to detail the work site and the company/contractor involved and be specific to the individual and the work location.
- 4.13 Public transport should be avoided where possible.
- 4.14 Vehicles used must be in a good state of repair and maintenance.
- 4.15 Staff must avoid sharing vehicles and travel separately. If this involves hire cars these should be intensively cleaned before and after use.



On site or In field

- 4.16 Staff may need to travel equipped with signage which explains the work being undertaken to the public.
- 4.17 On site staff must maintain the specified social distance from other staff and members of the public at all times (typically 2m but may be different in different countries). Where this distance absolutely cannot be secured then other relevant government guidance should be followed (e.g. staff should work side by side, or facing away from each other, rather than face to-face)
- 4.18 Consideration should be given as to how disturbance from dogs will be dealt with.
- 4.19 If workers have to share enclosed spaces, they should keep the window open for ventilation and wash hands on leaving.
- 4.20 Staff will need to be equipped for the work and with spare equipment. This includes items such as food and water.
- 4.21 Additional investment in equipment which can capture site data rapidly and comprehensively and hygienically for viewing offsite may be appropriate.



Return

- 4.22 Consideration needs to be given on how equipment and PPE will be cleaned or disposed of safely and how safe re-entry to the office workspace will be handled.



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