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Face Mask Guidance on Construction Sites

In light of the Construction Leadership Council (CLC)'s statement on the use of face masks on construction sites to help reduce the spread of the new COVID-19 variant*, we would like to inform you as to how this will impact your workforce.

WHAT IS THE UK GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO WEARING FACE MASKS?

From Tuesday 30 November, the wearing of face masks is now required by law in most public indoor places, excluding hospitality venues where food and drink is consumed. However, it is still recommended that coverings should still be worn in indoor places that are crowded and enclosed, especially where there is a high probability of people coming into close contact with one another.

WHAT IS THE GUIDANCE ON FACE COVERINGS FOR OTHER NATIONS WITHIN THE UK?

- In Scotland, masks must be worn in most indoor public spaces, including public transport, shops and gyms. They must be worn in pubs and restaurants when not seated and also in the workplace.
- In Northern Ireland, masks must also be worn on public transport, in shops and hospitality venues.
- In Wales, masks are legally required on public transport and it is strongly advised that they are worn in pubs and restaurants when not eating or drinking.

ARE WORKERS REQUIRED TO WEAR FACE MASKS ON SITE?

In the UK, the use of face coverings and/or PPE at the moment is not a legal requirement while carrying out construction activities. However, the CLC recommends that there are times when they should still be worn. For example, government guidance currently discourages the precautionary use of PPE to protect against COVID-19 unless in a clinical setting, or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case.

Where workers onsite are not required to wear Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and their workplace is crowded and enclosed, and they come into contact with others they do not normally meet, face coverings should be available and worn. Examples of spaces where employees could be in close proximity include site offices, meeting rooms and site transport. However, like other hospitality venues, it is worth noting that face coverings are not legally required to be worn in canteens.



WHAT ADVICE DOES SOCOTEC HAVE FOR CLIENTS WITH REGARDS TO THE USE OF FACE MASKS?

SOCOTEC is closely monitoring the evaluation of the Omicron COVID-19 outbreak and advises clients to keep up-to-date with advice from the NHS, Public Health England and the World Health Organisation, as well as the latest legislation/guidance issued by the UK Government.

**Please note that the latest CLC statement is based on Government guidance for England only – other restrictions and guidance may apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.*

BREXIT UPDATE

Further to the communication issued in November 2020, we would also like to notify clients that the transition from CE to UKCA markings has been extended to 1 January 2023. This has been prolonged in recognition of disruption that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused businesses, thereby allowing additional time for them to adjust to the new requirements. For instance, it is still acceptable to purchase goods such as face masks and PPE with CE markings during this extended period. However, as of 1 December 2023, these must be marked as UKCA.

HOW CAN SOCOTEC HELP?

Please be assured that SOCOTEC's Health and Safety Consultancy is always on hand to support with the finer details of health and safety guidance. You can get in touch with us at H&S-Enquiries@socotec.com or on 0845 603 2112.

Want to find out more about SOCOTEC's Health & Safety services? [Click here](#)