

Onsite risk & safety management during Covid-19

Safety measures and working practices



Covid-19 – Putting Safety First

The health and safety of Openreach employees, subcontractors, partners and the public is our number one priority. In order to adhere to safe social distancing measures set by the Government, we have taken swift action using guidance from the UK’s Public Health bodies to implement additional risk assessments and safety procedures for all field-based teams.

We have communicated and implemented new safe working instructions to all employees, subcontractors and partners. Clear direction has been given which states:

1. A local risk assessment should be undertaken before the start of every job
2. If at any point an employee feels at risk – because they are unable to adhere to safe social distancing measures at work, they will:
 - a. Immediately stop work
 - b. Make the site and/or job safe
 - c. Contact their local manager/operation team for instructions on what to do next
3. If at any point local residents feel at risk our staff and partners will stand down

New safety measures in action

We have extensively reviewed all programmes, work styles and operating methods to determine what work we feel is safe to continue in line with social distancing measures. Where people can work from home we have enabled this by moving the majority of our desk-based teams out of our offices. We employ a large field organisation and for these individuals we have provided additional safety guidance – summary shown below.

Areas of Risk	Guidance	Areas of Risk	Guidance
Sharing Vans or PPE	Stop	Working in Exchanges AND Cable Chambers	Maintain 2m where possible.
Customer Signatures Required		Customer-end, outside. (e.g. Surveying outside walls to determine connection points)	
Multi dwelling unit (MDUs) – Proactive build		Opening box in public street	
New Sites: Proactive onsite build		Rodding/Cobra with 2 people	
Sharing Tools	AVOID Ensure these are thoroughly cleaned prior to and after handling.	2 people surveys (e.g. roof, dangerous road, Traffic Management)	
Handling Customer Equipment		Civils in public areas or private areas	
Manual Poling	Risk assess and follow exceptional works process.	Collecting stores form hubs	
Re-Shelling Cabinets & DSLAM	Risk assess, follow exceptional works process and hygiene supervisor required.	Intrusive Survey	
Working or Accessing Internal Areas for provision (e.g. Internal Survey, Cable Run, NTE placement)	CNI* ONLY – Maintain 2m where possible.	Interactions with Customer or Public	
Customer Inductions		Working in manholes AND tunnels	
Access to plant on private properties	Vulnerable customer delivery or repair ONLY. Risk assess on case by case.	All Repairs	
Newsites Specific: Working or Accessing Internal Areas.	Only if homeowner occupied or occupied in near future.	Overhead and Hoists	
Access to MDU for: Provision of CNI circuit or Repair.		Cell sites	
Accessing non-public areas (e.g. basement), and where passing through MDU (e.g. roof)		Risk Assess, maintain 2m where possible.	

Work that has stopped with immediate effect

Where we are unable to guarantee safe working within the guidelines (being 2 metres away from anyone at all times) we have halted all work with immediate effect. As a result, we have stopped;

- Sharing vehicles – we are hiring additional vehicles so people can travel in isolation
- Sharing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- New Site developments (construction sites) – residential and commercial. We are mobilising a specialised team to deal with ongoing work on key construction sites e.g. hospitals
- MDUs (Multiple Dwelling Units), commonly known as residential flats and commercial office space
- Unsolicited calling/door knocking to request permission to work on private land. We will not be working on private land/residential gardens and this work will be postponed
- We have assessed all 2 person working modes and where safe social distancing cannot be achieved e.g. manual pole erection, re-shelling cabinets - all such work will be stopped

Continuing work with additional risk assessment









We consider the rest of our FTTP build to be low risk, where sites are dispersed and where we are able to adhere to safe social distancing measures. For all works we have implemented additional safety protocols;

- A full risk assessment will be completed before starting work and if social distancing cannot be guaranteed the work will not proceed
- We will add additional supervision and management to support teams working and to support adherence to guidelines
- If for any reason our staff or partners feel uncomfortable undertaking the work, we have asked them to stand down
- We will be putting up additional signage to explain to residents what work is taking place
- If local residents are unhappy with the work ongoing in their area, we have asked our staff and partners to stand down
- We have completed a series of safety briefings with Openreach and partner staff on maintaining social distancing and will continue to reinforce the new guidance with ongoing communication
- We can split our work in to three main categories:
 - Sole working – a lot of work we do falls into this category and people will travel in their own company vehicles from home: survey, planning (mobile), jointing, auditing, supervision, splicing
 - Two person – cabling. It is easy to keep social distance as one member of the team will be feeding and the other will be at the other end of the cable run receiving
 - Two/three persons – civils gangs. We have briefed all civils gangs on new social distancing measures. They will comply with all health and safety requirements required of the roles. We will be conducting additional supervisory visits.

Openreach believes that it can undertake this safely and working in this type of external environment/network poses low risk to our people, customers and the public as whole.

Our social separation and hygiene rules

We've outlined the key principles to manage and enforce social distancing and hygiene rules for our key workers:

- 1  Do not report to work if you exhibit any symptoms and/or anyone within your household is self-isolating. Follow existing business guidelines.
- 2  Do not share vehicles at any time, including during breaks
- 3  Display key worker notification signage at all sites when work activities are being undertaken.
- 4  Risk assess all work activities, record your findings and implement all appropriate control measures to maintain **2 metre social distancing**; e.g. **step out and step in** process between team members. If unable to maintain; stop, reassess, innovate if safe to do so.
- 5  Make sure you have sufficient supplies of cleaning agents to maintain a safe, clean and sanitised environment when working, driving and operating plant and/or machinery.
- 6  Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available.
- 7  Minimise the need to rotate plant operators to minimise dual use and handling of controls.
- 8  Report all incidents, near misses, hazards and breaches of the rules via the relevant process

Work guidance – do's and don'ts

Areas of Risk	Guidance
Sharing Vans or PPE	Stop
Customer Signatures Required	
Multi-dwelling unit (MDU) – Proactive build	
New Sites: Proactive on-site build	Avoid Ensure these are thoroughly cleaned prior to and after handling.
Sharing Tools	
Handling Customer Equipment	Risk assess and follow exceptional works process.
Manual Pallet	Risk assess, follow exceptional works process and hygiene supervisor required.
Re-Shelving Cabinets & DSLAM	CNE* ONLY – Maintain 2m where possible.
Working or Accessing Internal Areas for provision (e.g. Internal Survey, Cable Run, NTE placement)	
Customer Inductions	Vulnerable customer delivery or repair ONLY. Risk assess on case by case.
Access to plant on private properties	
Revisits Specific: Working or Accessing Internal Areas.	Risk Assess, maintain 2m where possible.
Access to MDU fan	
Provision of CM circuit or Repair.	
Accessing non-public areas (e.g. basement), and where passing through MDU (e.g. roof)	

Areas of Risk	Guidance
Working in Exchanges AND Cable Chambers	Maintain 2m where possible.
Customer-end, outside (e.g. Surveying outside walls to determine connection points)	
Opening box in public street	
Roofing/Cobra with 2 people	
2 people surveys (e.g. roof, dangerous road, Traffic Management)	
Civils in public areas or private areas	
Collecting stores from hubs	
Intrusive Survey	
Interactions with Customer or Public	
Working in manholes AND tunnels	
All Repairs	
Overhead and Hoists	
Cell sites	
Handling and moving equipment which requires more than 1 person to safely lift.	

* Ethernet CNE sectors defined as Health, Public Safety, Food, Defence and security, Transport, Communications, Utilities, Space, Government, Banking, Manufacturing (if related to CNE in current Covid-19 – NHS)

If at any point you feel at risk because you cannot follow social distancing and hygiene rules, you must:

1. Immediately **stop** work.
2. Make the site and work area **safe**.
3. Contact your line manager for instructions on what to do next.

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Always maintain the 2 metre social distancing rule
STEP OUT to give space for someone to **STEP IN**



3 core practices you should follow:

1. **Self isolating**
 - 7 days if you have symptoms
 - 14 days if a member of your household has symptoms
2. **Good hand and respiratory hygiene**
 - Wash hands before, during and after tasks for 20 seconds
 - Sneeze into arm or tissue and put in bin immediately
3. **Social distancing of 2 metres**
 - Remain 2m away from others, this will require some innovation on the job and **should always be the first choice**. Some innovation examples:
 - Take turns to **step out and step in**
 - Breaking heavy loads down to reduce 2 person lifts

Important information:

- Face masks do not stop you contracting COVID19; the **3 core practices** (above) are the best defences
- UK Public Health bodies have advised that working closer than 2 metres to someone, in exceptional circumstances, doesn't require additional PPE
- These working practices are under continued review during this COVID period and will be updated periodically
- **These working arrangements may be audited at any time**
- This advice is endorsed by the BT Group Chief Medical Officer and Director of Safety, Openreach

Exceptional working less than 2m apart

The **rigorous application of self isolation and hygiene** means that coming together, clean and symptom free, for as short a period as possible, in **exceptional circumstances**, is in line with guidance from the UK's Public Health bodies.

If a specific task cannot be achieved without coming within 2m, but not physically touching, you must conduct a thorough risk assessment.

If the risk assessment deems closer than 2m working is required, the following must be discussed with your working partner(s):

- Are you and your household symptom free?
- Can we innovate i.e. break the load down or do the job differently to maintain 2m distance?
- Can we use a **step out, step in** method that allows us to maintain 2m distance if the job needs both of our skill sets?
- Can we supply service a different way?

If you can't achieve the above, Public Health bodies have advised that working less than 2m distance apart **does not require additional PPE**.

For example, this may apply to lifting heavy equipment, re-shelling a damaged cabinet or yanking a stuck cable.

It **does not** mean, working together in the back of a van, clustering around a manhole, working as if nothing has changed.

Before commencing less than 2m working discuss the following with your working partner(s):

- How do we meet and maintain the hygiene standards?
- How do we eliminate the sharing of any tools?
- How do we minimise the length of time we are less than 2m distance apart?

Some longer duration works will require an **extra level of supervision for hygiene**, such as re-shelling of a damaged cabinet.

Remember, your safety is our **highest priority**. If you feel you cannot do the job safely, stop, make the site safe, and call your manager for advice.

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