

Day Associates

Construction and Property Professionals



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Services & Safety Review

Day Associates Limited

Castle Malwood

Minstead

SO43 7PE

Latest Review:

5th January 2021

Reference:

DA-COVID

Prepared by:

Chris Barrett

1.0 General Statement

This Safety Review is in addition to and supplementary of the Day Associates H&S Policy. It relates specifically to the current COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic across the UK and reflective of Building Surveying Professional Services offered by Day Associates.

It is the intention of the company to provide continuity of services throughout this challenging time whilst supporting and protecting the safety of its employees and clients.

This Safety Review outlines the companies approach to a 'risk based' service provision, working with our clients to assess situations and environments before and during planned site visits.

We are closely monitoring developments and following official advice on the COVID-19 outbreak from both the UK Government and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

We know many clients and professionals have questions and concerns about how services will be provided for both essential and desirable works. Day Associates strives to remain resilient and adaptable during this difficult time and intends to work closely with clients to provide a continued professional service and guidance to minimise the impact to all parties.

2.0 Remote Working

Given the actions taken by the UK Government, we have taken the decision not to hold any face to face events, conference/seminar attendance or meetings. All staff have been supported to work remotely from home with office calls directed to appropriate staff.

All staff have authorised remote access to files and client documentation where necessary and appropriate. Our GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) policy remains in place during this time with no changes to the provisions made. Clients information is still protected and restricted to Day Associates employees for the purpose of direct (instructed) service delivery only.

With the remote working provisions put in place, Day Associates can continue to provide its services with little to no negative impact or reduction in efficiency.

3.0 Client Visits and Site Inspections

The COVID-19 virus is having an impact on Building Surveyors and other associated professionals whose work typically involves direct contact with clients, customers and tenants, whether in an office environment or through visits to an occupied property. This is causing significant uncertainty for many, especially as Government guidance evolves frequently.

In addition to adhering to UK Government advice and RICS guidance; Day Associates support that employees who are involved in work where there is limited contact with clients, customers or tenants, such as through inspections and appraisals, have a clear strategy to follow for on-site engagement to ensure the health and safety of all those involved.

Essentially, employees should consider:

- Whether the instruction or request from the client, customer or tenant is absolutely necessary?
- Is there an alternative, safe method of delivering the service without contact or attendance?
- For necessary inspections and appraisals, can this be carried out from an external location, un-occupied internal placement, at a safe distance or with other reasonable safeguarding provisions in place?
- Discuss with the client whether postponing the appointment is possible?
- Can the Surveyor provide support and guidance through the use of technology? (i.e. can the occupant or their agent use video conferencing and/or mobile phone video calls to liaise with the Surveyor and provide visual walkthroughs and images of defects?)

For some works and defects, delays in service and subsequent repairs may have an impact on a vulnerable tenant or could result in disrepair. In these circumstances, if a decision is made to carry out an inspection and later repair oversight, it is essential to adhere to UK Government advice with regards to interactions and social distancing.

In addition to the above, Day Associates will explicitly communicate the risks and approaches associated with site visits and client contact. Day Associates shall work closely with clients to discuss and review the health and safety measures that shall be taken and safeguarding requirements of both the surveyor and client/tenant.

Day Associates shall contact clients/tenants prior to site attendance in which to discuss and confirm the following:

- Have you travelled to or returned from any foreign country in the last 4 weeks?
- Do you have/ any symptoms of the Covid-19 (Coronavirus)?
- Does anyone else in the premises have any symptoms?
- If yes have they been tested?
- Are you or your family in self isolation?
- Is there any known risk for the surveyor to enter the premises?
- Are you happy for the surveyor to attend whilst maintaining a 2m social distance?

This information shall be used to review and risk assess the physical environment the Surveyor is being asked to enter. At this point the inspection may be cancelled with obvious justification given.

In the event that a tenant (or their household) are in either self-isolation or imposed isolation due to personal clinical vulnerability and pre-existing health circumstances (as guided by the UK Government); but still request a visit, Day Associates shall decline until further notice and a change of circumstances has been confirmed. In some cases, if the property can be vacated temporarily, inspections may take place; this will however be reviewed on a case by case basis.

On arrival to site, Surveyors are to check again that there are no known symptoms or health concerns present leading to risks on either party.

Day Associates shall support the decision of either the Surveyor or the client to cancel the inspection prior to commencement if a risk is deemed present.

4.0 Government Guidance

The UK Government provide formal guidance and regularly revised instruction on the following:

- The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and the variant strain.
- How to help prevent the spread of all respiratory infections including COVID-19
- What to do if someone in the workplace becomes ill
- Advice on sick pay and certification of absence from work resulting from COVID-19
- Business support measures and 'Job Retention Scheme'

Further information on each can be found here:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses)

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5.0 Surveyors (additional H&S measures for site visits)

In addition to the normal H&S practices of Building Surveyors (outlined within the company policy and risk assessments), the following additional measures are recommended:

- Use disposable gloves when arriving on site, throughout the inspection and dispose of prior to re-entering your vehicle.
- Wet wipes can be used as an (initial) alternative to washing so surveyors can clean their hands before travelling home.
- An alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be used (where possible and available) by the surveyors after cleaning their hands with a wet wipe (on site prior to journey home where hand washing with soap should be the first action).
- All staff are encouraged to wash their hands at regular intervals throughout the day but especially when they have returned home from a visit.
- All employees to keep a clean and tidy working environment (including car) to limit the risk of bacteria.

6.0 Remote Working (Including Employee Wellbeing)

Day Associates will maintain regular contact with all staff via a face time conference call with the full team. Additional meetings and discussions may take place but a minimum fortnightly team discussion will allow the team to engage with one another and obtain regular updates to reflect any changes.

The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) have published guidance on 'working from home' with note to both Display Screen Equipment assessments and stress/mental health. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

The UK Government have provided clear guidance for employees relating to statutory sick pay, proof of sickness, furloughed workers, claiming benefits and more. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-guidance-for-employees>

The UK Government have also raised awareness for mental health, stress and employee wellbeing. They recommend that all employees read through the best practice guidance available from the Mind.org website (or suitable alternative). Further information can be found here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapseb4523>

7.0 Notifying Employer of Sickness, Symptoms or Self-Isolation

It is necessary for any member of staff to notify their employer if they become ill with symptoms of the Coronavirus and/or choose to self-isolate and stop working. This also applies to ceasing work to provide care and support to others.

The UK Government guidance must be followed regarding isolation (both the employee and other members of their household). Guidance for this can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

In any situation, each member of staff should contact the Managing Director directly to discuss circumstances and will be advised further.

8.0 NHS Test and Trace & Lockdown Procedure

NHS Test and Trace is a key part of the country's ongoing COVID-19 response with an effort to rapidly detect people who have recently come into close contact with a new COVID-19 case. This is with a view to take swift action to minimise transmission of the virus.

By maintaining records of its staff, customers and tenants/occupants; Day Associates Ltd will help NHS Test and Trace to identify and notify people who may have been exposed to the virus.

As such, Day Associates Ltd are committed to following the Government Guidance by:

- Requesting direct contact details of Tenants/Occupants in which to contact directly prior to a Surveyors attendance and to discuss the following points:
 - Has anyone within the property recently travelled to or returned from any foreign country?
 - Does anyone within the property currently have/ or recently had any symptoms of the Covid-19 virus?
 - Does anyone else in the premises have any symptoms? If yes have they been tested?
 - Is anyone within the property in self isolation or clinically vulnerable?
 - Is there any known risk for the surveyor to enter the premises?
 - Are you happy for the surveyor to attend whilst being socially distant and with use of PPE/RPE (i.e. face mask and gloves)?
- Asking that if circumstances change (for either party) that direct contact is made between the tenant/occupant and Day Associates Ltd to identify risks and to agree whether the site visit can still continue safely.
- Unless necessary and explicitly agreed beforehand; to ensure that only an individual Surveyor visits a residential property to minimise interaction within a home.
- Asking at least one member of every household, group of customers or visitors (up to 6 people) to provide their name and contact details (phone number or email address) for NHS Test and Trace purposes. For households this can be a single contact, however for general site meetings this will extend to include Property Managers, Contractors and the like individually.
- Keeping a record of all staff working at various premises and work times on a given day and their contact details in which to provide to NHS Test and Trace if required.
- Keeping these records of customers, tenants/occupants and staff for 21 days and provide data to NHS Test and Trace if requested. When that information is requested by the NHS Test and Trace service, the service would at this point be responsible for compliance with data protection legislation for that period of time.
- Adhering to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); noting that personal details are only held for the purposes of NHS Test and Trace and Covid-19 Secure measures in support of surveying services. No details shall be passed to 3rd parties and are held secure by Day Associates Ltd. Information of this type will not be used for other purposes, and NHS Test and Trace will not disclose this information to any third party unless required to do so by law. We keep our privacy/ data policy under regular review, and we will make new versions available on our privacy notice website page. See: <https://www.dayassociatesltd.com/data-policy-and-gdpr-statement>

You can read further information on [how NHS Test and Trace works](#) by clicking on this link.

Please note that Day Associates Ltd promotes the safe working environment of its staff and supports its Surveyors in cancelling appointments last minute if safety circumstances change or site arrangements differ from previously agreed conditions.

In all circumstances, we shall endeavour to communicate any changes to relevant parties at the earliest opportunity and request the support and understanding of all customers during these challenging times.

We always seek to work collaboratively with our customers for a mutually safe environment when having to meet indoors or in small groups for property/construction related works.