

Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying at home and away from others (social distancing)

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<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others-social-distancing/pages/going-to-work/>

Going to work

The Scottish Government has high expectations of how fair work principles should be applied during the current crisis and have issued a [joint statement with the STUC](#) which should be taken into account when applying this guidance. As set out in the section on staying at home, people can travel to and from work, but only where you cannot work from home.

With the exception of the organisations covered in the section on closing certain businesses and venues, the government has not compelled other businesses to close – indeed it is important for some business to carry on – however, public health benefits will be enhanced by wider business closure.

All individuals and businesses that are not being specifically required to close should consider a key set of questions– and at all times work on the precautionary basis:

- is what you do essential or material to the effort against the virus or to the wellbeing of society?
- if so, can your staff work from home?
- if not, can you practise safe social distancing and comply with ALL other standard health and safety requirements?

If the answer to none of the above questions is yes, our advice on a precautionary basis is to close.

All employers and employees should discuss their working arrangements, and employers should take every possible step to facilitate their employees working from home, including providing suitable IT and equipment to enable remote working.

Sometimes this will not be possible, as not everyone can work from home. Business should look critically at their role and operations.

Non-essential business sectors – like construction (unless it is essential construction, such as a hospital) – should close unless and until we can all be clear how operations can be undertaken safely. We will work with the sector - and others - to consider if it is possible to produce appropriate guidance on that specific point. Unless and until such guidance is issued, non-essential construction sites should stay closed.

If you cannot work from home then you can still travel to work, provided you are not showing coronavirus symptoms and neither you nor any of your household are self-isolating. This is consistent with advice from the Chief Medical Officer.

Employers who have people in their offices or onsite should ensure that employees are able to follow NHS Inform and Scottish Government guidance including, where possible, maintaining a 2 metre distance from others, and washing their hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds (or using hand sanitiser gel if soap and water is not available). Read more: [Coronavirus: business and social distancing guidance](#).

Work carried out in people's homes, for example by tradespeople carrying out repairs and maintenance, can continue, provided that the tradesperson is well and is not showing coronavirus symptoms and neither they nor any of their household are self-isolating. Again, it will be important to ensure that NHS Inform guidelines, including maintaining a 2 metre distance from any household occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety.

No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, such as emergency plumbing or repairs, and where the tradesperson is willing to do so. In such cases, [Health Protection Scotland guidance](#) can provide advice to tradespeople and households. No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild.

As set out in the section on closing non-essential shops and public spaces, the government has ordered certain businesses and venues to close. We set out which organisations this requirement covers in [Coronavirus: business and social distancing guidance](#).

Advice for employees of these organisations on employment and financial support is available at: findbusinesssupport.gov.scot

At all times, workers should follow the NHS Inform [guidance on self-isolation](#) if they or anyone in their household shows coronavirus symptoms.