

Day Associates

Construction and Property Professionals



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Services & Safety Review

Day Associates Limited

Castle Malwood

Minstead

SO43 7PE

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Reference:

DA-COVID

Prepared by:

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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. 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 daily.

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 the day 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 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.

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 have provided recent guidance on the following:

- The novel coronavirus (COVID-19)
- 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:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-employees-employers-and-businesses>

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 weekly contact with all staff via a face time conference call with the full team. Additional meetings and discussions may take place but a minimum weekly 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.