

Covid-19 Road and Street Works Bulletin 008: Good practice during the Covid-19 recovery

2 October 2020



The HAUC England guidance on the Road and Street Works Bulletin: Good practice during the Covid-19 recovery text has been given version 008. Any further developments as a result of the review process will be detailed below:

Date	Version	Comment
12 June 2020	008.1	2 nd version
2 October 2020	008.2	3 rd version update to current situation plus additional images

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Introduction by Joint Chairs of HAUC (England)

As the industry continues working with the [latest Government guidance](#) and the country learns to live with Covid-19, new challenges and opportunities are inevitably arising. The industry needs to continue to adapt, be agile and innovative in order to operate effectively within this challenging environment.

The advice below is intended to provide a framework for planning, cooperating and implementing work so that, as effectively as possible, we continue to deliver the essential work of providing services and safe highways whilst keeping the workforce and the public safe. Consistency and transparency are crucial.


This framework is aimed at being a practical guide to assist the industry, and a place to capture good practice, ideas and example. This is the second update and we plan to continue updating it as changes demand, so please do share any examples or photos that you have. You can send these to your regular HAUC England, JAG or Street Works UK contacts.

Peter Loft and David Latham

1.0 Highway space

- I.1. Highway space is being used differently as we operate in the new normal with more emphasis on walking, cycling, and reallocating road space to support the need for social distancing. This needs to be managed alongside other changes being made to public open spaces and changes in vehicular traffic as the country gets back to work and lives with Covid-19.
- I.2. Works promoters needs to continue being aware of the changing nature of the field of operation but this does also present opportunities for joint works and better coordination. We have as an industry spoken about the need for this for many years – now is the time when we can change the way we work for the better and put in place working practices that will help us all now and in the future.
- I.3. At the start of Covid-19, many Promoters had to postpone or cancel major schemes that would have involved close interaction with the general public. As these essential works are re planned and scheduled, an increase in the number of “early start” requests is likely. By all practitioners liaising and working together, discussing the merits of the works, and how the works can be implemented, it should be possible to be reprogram them with minimal delay. Progressing these schemes will be of benefit to the public by ensuring continued reliable services and facilities.
- I.4. As people live with Covid-19 but with ongoing restrictions in place, it is anticipated traffic on many routes will change. This may vary with different peak patterns and may present opportunities to work at locations that would be difficult in normal times. There may also be a need to consider working hours to allow more flexibility, and to allow more time for works to be completed if hours need to be restricted to deal with potentially longer peak patterns.

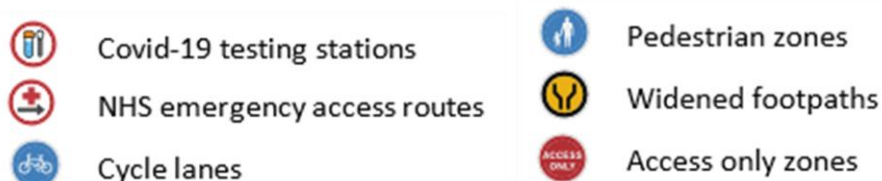
- I.5. There will remain other locations and routes, such as those to and between hospitals, those to and between food and medical supply distribution depots and testing facilities that are very significant in the part they play in fighting the Covid-19 virus and its consequences. At these locations, restrictions [what type?] may need to remain strengthened and they may not all be obvious.
- I.6. Where restrictions, for example, traffic sensitivity, working times, etc, can be relaxed, these may present opportunities to complete work at difficult locations and these should be discussed on a site by site basis between the Highway Authority (HA) and the works promoter. Forward planning will be key and transparent and consistent data will underpin the whole process. Either the promoter or the HA can initiate these discussions, but it will be for the promoter to assess and ensure that their workforce (including supply chain etc.) are able to undertake the works to completion and comply with social distancing as set out by PHE and HSE. Forward plans should be uploaded as soon as possible on Street Manager to help these discussions.
- I.7. Advice on restrictions, for example, traffic sensitivity, working times, etc, both relaxation and strengthening were covered in bulletin 003. For convenience, we have condensed and included the advice in this bulletin 008.



Elgin has made some key improvements to one.network to support the Covid-19 response measures including the ability for highway authorities to communicate new types of traffic management to deliver safe streets and protect key services. The information is freely available on the [one.network](#)

Highway authorities with access to the one.network Traffic Management module can plot these traffic management measures on one.network today and they will be communicated to Google, TomTom and other services automatically. Guidance on using the new functionality is available [here](#) and [here](#).

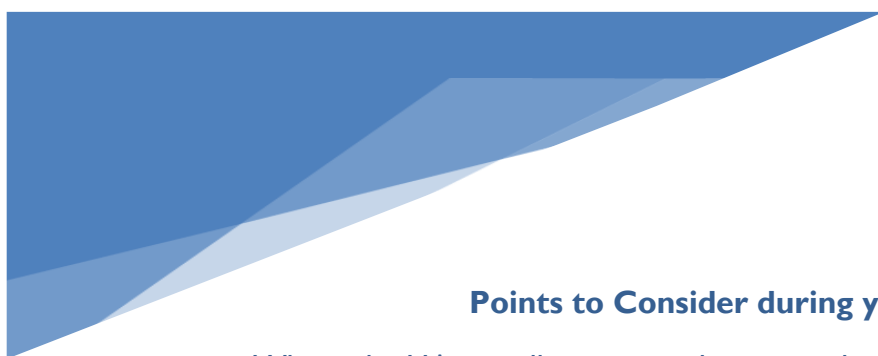
Highway Authorities which do not currently have access to one.network Traffic Management module should contact Elgin at info@elgintech.com to arrange access and training. Under a special arrangement with HAUC UK Elgin has waived charges for Covid related usage of the module in order to facilitate the rapid sharing of data during this critical period.



Current Bulletins during Covid-19, 001.2 essential works, 002 defects, 004 Section 81 defective apparatus, 005.2 Streetworks ticket, 006 charges and permits, 007.1 Green Transport Restart, 008.2 Good practice during the Covid-19 recovery, 009 Street Manager and new legislation 1 July 2020, 010 Working in local Covid-19 Hotspots

2.0 Communication and Coordination

- 2.1. Communication is key for an effective coordination process. We all have had to learn new ways, conference call products such as [MS Teams](#) enable meetings to take place over the internet rather than face to face. These conference calls, which can accommodate relatively large numbers of participants, could be used for the continuance of Co-ordination meetings. It would currently seem sensible to increase the frequency of meetings from the normal quarterly or to have more regular, smaller meetings to co-ordinate activity and explore opportunities for joint works in busy areas. Especially where opportunities for collaboration can be discussed with the larger projects accommodating BAU activities of others at the same time.



Points to Consider during your co-ordination meetings:

- Where the HA is reallocating road space, widening pavements and putting in cycle lanes they should, consider the impact on surrounding roads including those owned by other authorities, and offer other works promoters the opportunity to do any works they need to do at the same time;
- Actively look for opportunities between works promoters to share permits and do joint works. This may involve slightly changing timings and the permit may need to cover a longer duration, but one job will reduce the impact of the works on the public and avoid the need for the same road or footway to be closed repeatedly as promoters look to catch-up on any backlogs;
- If the HA is taking forward maintenance/resurfacing work, offer other works promoters the opportunity to works just before so avoiding the need for reinstatements.
- All WP's will be seeking to initiate Government and Local initiatives as well as demands of regulators and customers to deliver works as restrictions are slowly lifted.
- It is important that we seek ways to work wherever possible. As mentioned throughout this best practice guide, thinking outside the box and agile working for the whole industry (HA and promoter) are essential to working as close to business as usual as possible, maximising the benefits of and opportunities for collaborative and joint working for the benefit of everyone.

- 2.2. It is important to note that notice periods for the various permits are minimums and more notice can and should be given when possible. Wherever possible, we should seek to think outside the box to look at ways of minimising the impact of the work whilst enabling that essential work to take place. Minor errors at the PAA stage can result in significant delays in processing PAAs. Through continued effective dialogue, any minor infringements should be overcome. These may by agreement be corrected at the PA stage, reducing delay. The application of appropriate Conditions may give confidence to all parties concerning the planning and delivery of the works.
- 2.3. The issuing of [SROH 4th Edition](#) is seen as a positive step to help build confidence and help where materials are in short supply and techniques could help delivery times. Street Manager is available for everyone to use and see what works are being planned.
- 2.4. Clearly, we need to take the public with us as works are carried out. The public will be judging our performance on site and we have an opportunity to show that we care and are doing our collective utmost to be safe, efficient, and as considerate as possible. Good planning, behaviours on site, notifications and signage will all help here. The public continue to relearn how to live in a social distancing world so clear informative signs letting them know clearly what is expected of them is essential.

3.0 Use of Permit Conditions

- 3.1. Permit Conditions are powerful tools and can when used effectively help ensure everyone knows what is expected of them. Below is commentary on those that might apply but be aware each one is site specific and should be judged on its merits.
- NCT 02b Extended working hours can assist with expediting work. Resources are limited so this should be reserved for those sites where site occupation must be as short as possible. Please remember to carry out usual checks and inform the local Environmental Health Officer.
 - NCT 04a Removal of surplus materials and plant. Effective use of highway space is essential and may be in short supply in some situations such as a retail environment where businesses are restarting their trade. In these cases, any plant and material not in use should either be removed swiftly or stored in a location that minimises the impact of the space taken up. Agreement between authority and promoter is essential here so that any condition is achievable and workable.
 - NCT 04b Storage of surplus materials and Plant, see 04a.
 - NCT 05a Road Occupation Dimensions can help where highway space is limited or certain parts of the highway need to be kept clear.
 - NCT 06 Traffic Space Dimensions. This condition relates to the space to be maintained for traffic and pedestrians and, again, whilst we all adjust to social distancing more space may need to be maintained. However, this relates only to highway space available for traffic/pedestrians and does not relate to other legal standards or guidance e.g. SDMs.

- NCT 10a Work Methodology can assist and be applied following agreement regarding working in ways that have the least possible impact e.g. directional drilling type techniques, multiple crews on site.
 - NCT 11b Publicity for proposed works will be essential on impactful work so that residents/businesses and other facilities know what to expect. These must be kept current if there are delays. Do what you say you are going to do when you say you are going to do it.
- 3.2. It should be noted that none of these conditions should be applied on a blanket basis and agreement between promoter and Authority is necessary especially if they are to be effective and deliver benefit. Either party can suggest the condition depending on who has the best knowledge of the site and or the work.
 - 3.3. Permit schemes as a core principle should offer discounts for good practice such as collaborative working. It is important that this incentive is made full use of. Permit schemes also require parity and the permitting of all work, especially the reallocation of highway space for cycling and walking. This is essential for effective coordination.
 - 3.4. Finally, a reminder please ensure everything is done to continue with social distancing in line with guidance from Public Health England both for our work force and the public.

4.0 Safety at Street and Road Works during the Covid 19 Pandemic

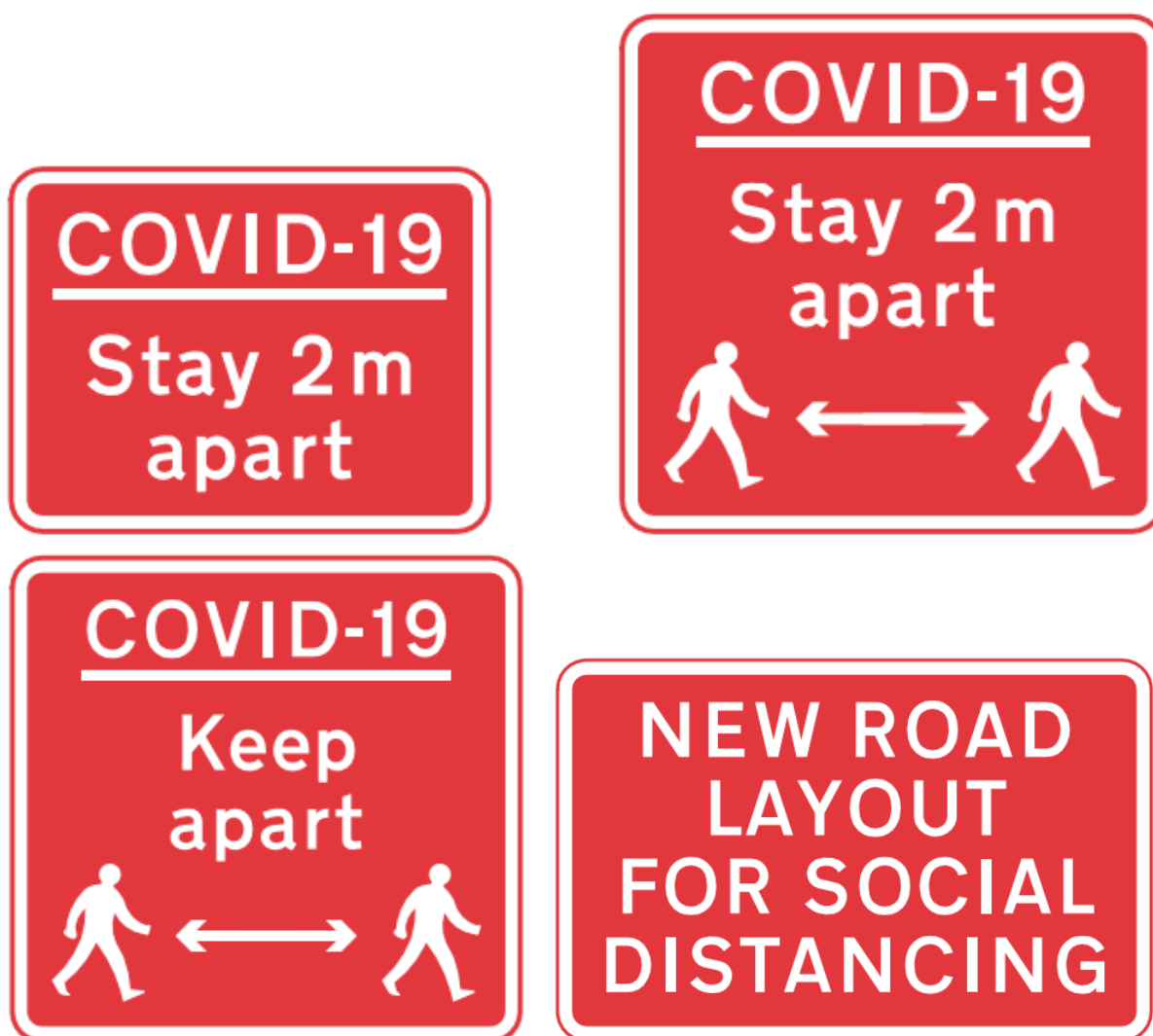
- 4.1. The **site-specific risk assessment** is more important than ever during this time and must be completed at all sites regardless of the nature, duration of the works or its location.
- 4.2. Planners, supervisors and operatives need to be mindful of the additional risks posed to all on street activities at this time and the nervousness of the public.
- 4.3. Works will have to take account of Government guidance on social distancing and managing public open spaces, we well as Public Health England's guidelines which may change. Practitioners will need to ensure that all activities reflect current requirements, especially when working on narrow or busy streets.
- 4.4. Each street and road work's site will need to ensure that all road and street users have been considered and that alterations to the normal configuration and usage of the road/street have been taken account of, for example, space given up to pedestrians to accommodate queueing at shops, banks etc. In particular, our responsibilities for those with disabilities is key.
- 4.5. Many organisations will have generic, task based risk assessments in place for on road/street activities and these should continue to be utilised where appropriate. However, Covid-19 brings a number of new factors that may need to be considered and assessed on a site by site specific basis.
- 4.6. It is important that site teams, their supervisors and managers etc. are reminded that, once works have commenced, the prevailing circumstances, conditions and site arrangements are reviewed as the works progress.

- 4.7. Teams need to be mindful of the local area and that locations may be or have been in “local lock down”. Consequently, residents may be nervous, but staff should remain calm if approached. If possible and appropriate, advance notice of the work with relevant contact information may assist, as will signage on site reminding everyone of the need for social distancing. Both should help limit face to face contact.
- 4.8. Please ensure your permit board/courtesy board or advance signing has the relevant information on it and is kept up to date. Contact details will be key.
- 4.9. Remember, if you are unsure whether it is safe to start or to continue to work, you should stop and seek advice.
- 4.10. Together as an industry, we have a legal obligation to work together to ensure that all works are carried out as safely as possible. All road and street works’ practitioners should report safety breaches to ensure the safety of both the public and the workforce. Street works inspectors and promoter supervisors both routinely visit sites and should, when they see an issue, inform the gang on site, if present and, if not, to the company responsible for the work.
- 4.11. When designing and installing Pop Up cycle or pedestrian facilities, care needs to be taken not to obstruct access to underground assets. The need to move heavy planters or cope with obstructed highways can delay or prevent repairs and restoration of essential services.
- 4.12. Please ensure where work is undertaken within or adjacent to ‘Pop Up’ cycle or pedestrian facilities that there is clear accountability for the maintenance and safety of the associated traffic management. There will need to be a review of the associated risk assessments to take into account the changes.

5.0 Examples of good practice

The Department for Transport has produced some authorised white on red traffic signs to support social distancing which should not be adapted but will provide a consistency and clarity of message to help further public understanding. Please see the link below and examples of the signs included.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885186/covid-19-temporary-signs-for-pedestrians-drivers-and-cyclists.pdf



Additional signage (used during lockdown but can be adapted as appropriate) (if using the latest Government message, keep up to date e.g. 'stay alert')



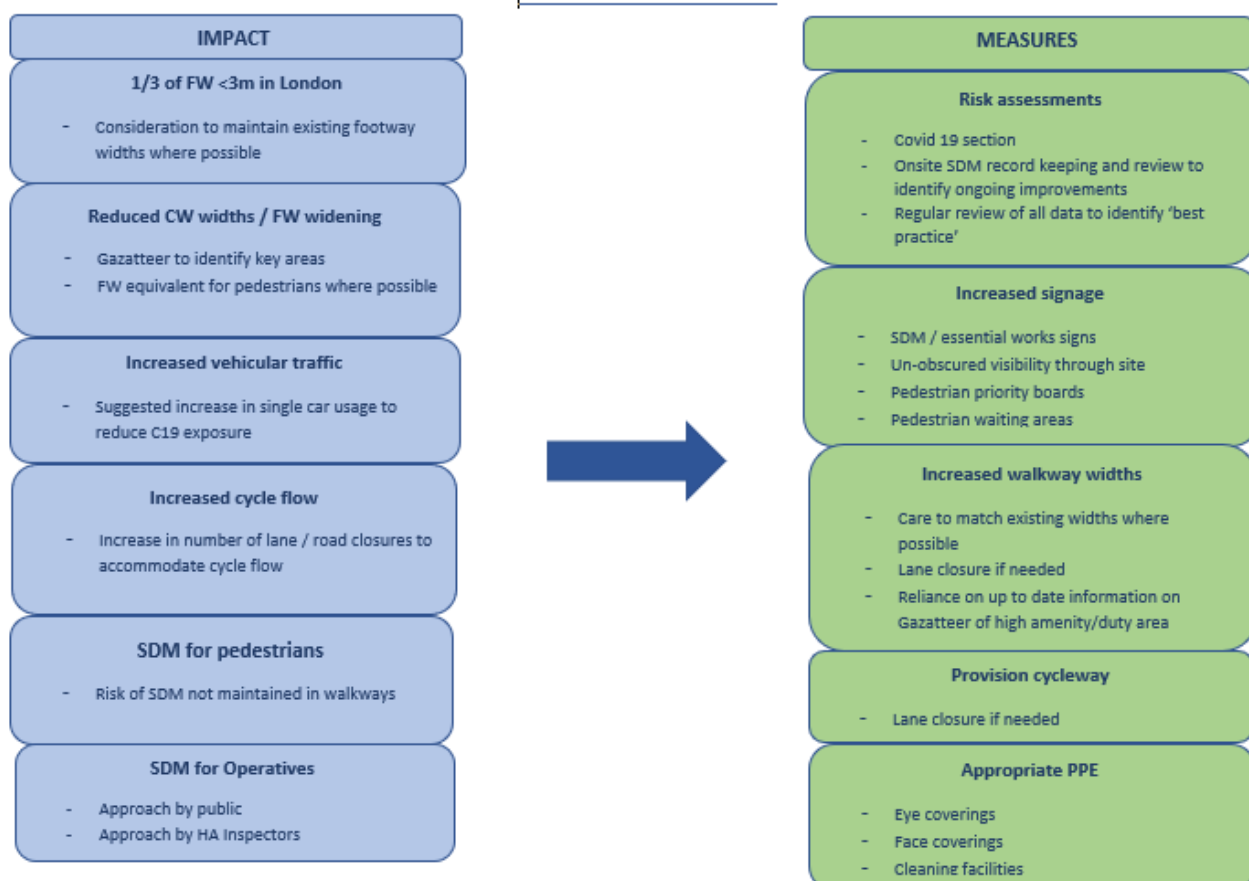
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PPE



Risk Mitigation

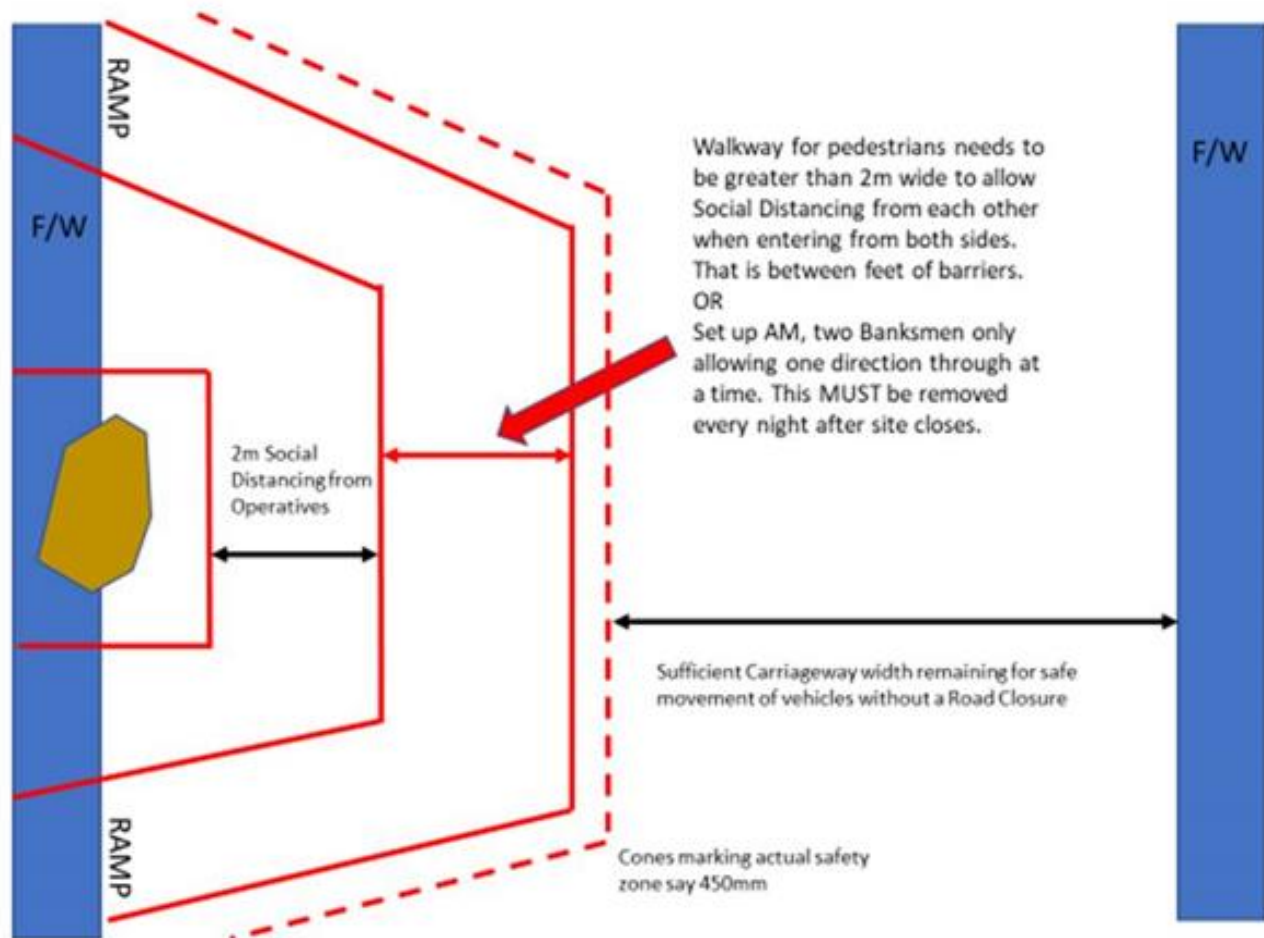
Covid 19 Measures



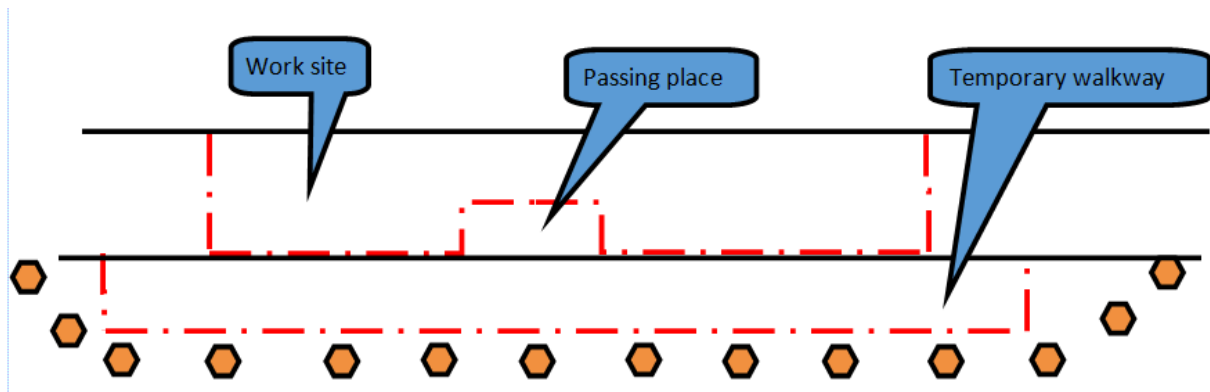
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Site set up

When designing the set up of a site the physical constraints of available highway need serious consideration with regard to how social distancing can be safely accommodated. This may mean occupying more of the highway than usual to allow safe passage of pedestrians, cyclists, and those with a disability whilst preserving social distancing for the workforce and highway users (occupation charging regimes should consider discounting in these cases). The amount of space may be minimised when work is not in progress as the 2m separation from the work force would no longer be required.



Social distancing between work force and public



Passing places for long runs of pedestrian walkway



Managing pedestrians



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Managing Cyclists



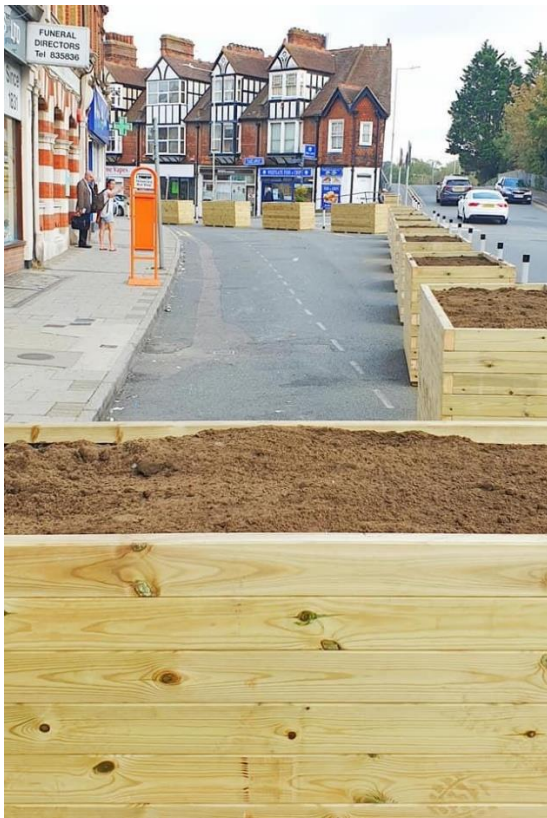
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Avoiding Obstructing Underground Assets with 'Pop up' facilities

Practice to be avoided - use of heavy planters with steel reinforced bottoms that are difficult to move and/or are placed over underground assets



Good practice – lighter planters (half filled with soil) that can be moved if needed to gain access, and placed specifically to avoid underground assets



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