

22nd July 2020

Covid-19 Road and Street works Bulletin 010 - Working in local Covid-19 Hotspots

Dear Colleagues,

As the country moves slowly back to a “new normal”, it is clear that we are still operating in unprecedented times where we still need to continue to be agile in our approach to onstreet activities, to carry on working together and also keep both the workforce and the public safe.

The Government’s advice in England is constantly under review and the current version can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work> .

However, as restrictions are slowly being lifted, there are regrettably some localised set-backs and lockdowns, or where restrictions may be re-imposed. In these cases, localised measures may be put in place by Local Authorities and all StreetWorks practitioners must therefore refer to these and comply with them accordingly. Measures may differ between different cases, so it is also important to stay up to date with what these may be and the area to which they apply.

Working in local Covid-19 Hotspots

Where local Covid-19 hotspots occur, practitioners are advised to follow all local requirements and the following general advice;

- The Government has made it clear that our roads remain open and they expect works, including emergency and essential street and road works to maintain utility and highway services to continue, ensuring that life-saving medicine, equipment, supplies and healthcare staff can travel across the country to where they are needed most.
- Government advice is, if you are working outside, then it is important to follow Public Health England and any local guidance.
- To ensure that essential works can take place, ask your supply chain to keep operating where possible.
- Plan and communicate well and try and build in resilience should the availability of the workforce be reduced, or the supply chain fails at short notice.
- Do not introduce blanket refusals of permits or notices. Other essential street and road works need to take place so continue to process them as usual wherever possible.
- Do not introduce blanket refusals of associated orders such as parking bay suspensions, TTROs etc.
- The highway authority will still need to include national conditions on permits, e.g. work restrictions applied where working in close proximity to a hospital. Utilities should accept reasonable conditions on planning and resilience. Authorities should not introduce any that are not reasonable e.g. requirement to place Heras fencing, netting and matting on all works, or requiring Traffic Sensitive times when there is reduced traffic flow.

Current Bulletins during Covid-19, 001.2 essential works, 002.1 defects, 004 Section 81 defective apparatus, 005.1 Streetworks ticket, 006 charges and permits, 007 Green Transport Restart, 008 Good practice during the Covid-19 recovery, 009 Street Manager and new legislation 1 July 2020, 010 local Covid hotspots



- Permits are still needed for works, as well as start and stop notices. Information continues to be needed for network management purposes.
- Early starts should still be used for major works where the network is available (i.e. it is not sensible to block routes to hospitals)
- It is worth repeating this point: act reasonably and communicate.

Enforcement

A common sense pragmatic approach needs to be applied when reviewing works. Shortfalls that are not safety related should be managed proportionately (e.g. erroneous/no permit info boards). This should also apply for S74s and, where best endeavors are being undertaken, then understanding needs to be given, However, where established requirements are disregarded or abused, promoters may find themselves subject to sanction and redress.

Prioritisation

In local Covid-19 Hotspot areas the public may well be sensitive to what is happening outside their houses and businesses and it is essential that work promoters are mindful of these sensitivities and the public's perception of their activities.

Whilst the overarching advice is to continue operating as close to business as usual if possible, whilst observing any local restrictions put in place and operating safely, there may be a need to prioritise work over a wider area to accommodate local sensitivities. Site specific risk assessments are essential for work in Covid-19 Hotspot areas and will inform priorities and actions.

Peter Loft and David Latham
Joint Chairs HAUC England

Agreed by all parties including the DfT, HAUC UK, JAG, Street Works UK and DCMS
Please note that the Scottish and Welsh Governments may issue their own advice.