

23 November 2020

## **Covid-19 Road and Street works Bulletin 001.3**

Dear Colleagues,

Following the Government's updates about controlling the spread of the Covid-19 virus and as restrictions are varied, either nationally or regionally, it remains clear that we continue to operate in unprecedented times where we need to be agile in our approach to work on street activities and still keep both the work force and public safe.

We wrote previously, with the full support of the Department of Transport, JAG (UK) and SWUK to remind all practitioners of the need to continue to work together, collaborate and communicate during the deployment of new permit schemes (PS) and Street Manager (SM). The need for working together has never been more important than now.

The Government's advice in England has changed and current restrictions are in force until at least 2<sup>nd</sup> December. However, the request for the construction sector to continue working where it is possible and safe to do so remains unchanged. The Government's guidance can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>

As we work within the current phase of the country's response to the Covid-19 virus, and indeed during whatever restrictions are in place through the winter, and we continue to work where it is possible and safe to do so, we urge everyone to continue keeping the established lines of communication open and all parties informed where difficulties arise.

All of our works continue to be vital in keeping goods, key workers and emergency services moving, deliveries flowing, and safeguarding the provision of utility services to support the NHS, local communities, homes and businesses.

There continues to be a need for the public to understand that our staff and contractor teams are working for local authorities, and statutory undertakers to keep both our roads safe and to safeguard our utility services. Everyone working in the highway continues to perform a critical role for the nation.

To assist with how we should operate responsibly, we have prepared the following advice based on the latest information. Complying with this advice in a consistent way will help us all through these testing times. We will keep this advice under review and update it as the situation evolves.

Current Bulletins during Covid-19, 001.3 essential works, 002.1 defects, 004 Section 81 defective apparatus, 005.3 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 local Covid hotspots



**This key advice should be followed;**

- It is essential that our roads remain open and that works to maintain utility and highway services to continues as well as efforts to restore matters to as near as normal as soon as possible. This is necessary to ensure that life-saving medicine, equipment, supplies and healthcare staff can travel across the country to where they are needed most, and the services that business, homes, and health care need to operate, are maintained and available.
- Government advice is, if you can work from home, do so, but if you are working outside then it is important to follow Public Health England guidance on social distancing. Anyone who can't work from home, for instance those in construction or manufacturing, should be actively encouraged to go to work.
- To ensure that works can take place, ask your supply chain to keep operating.
- Plan and communicate well and try and build in resilience should there be setbacks in availability of the workforce or the supply chain.
- Street and road works need to take place so please continue to process permits or notices as usual wherever possible.
- The highway authority will continue 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 at the present time e.g. requirement to place heras fencing, netting and matting on all works, or applying rigorously Traffic Sensitive times when there is reduced traffic flow.
- Early starts should continue to be used for major works where the network is available (i.e. it is not sensible to block routes to hospitals)
- Please continue acting reasonably and communicating.

**Enforcement**

During this time, 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.

**Coordination**

To help coordinate works and to support works promoters, it is helpful to consider the following advice:

- Give as much notice as possible of works that need to be carried out and the likely timing, using Street Manager.



Department  
for Transport



- Consider opportunities for joint working or sharing permits. For example, if works are being carried out by the highway authority to reallocate road space to put active travel measures in place or to carry out maintenance works, allow utilities the opportunity to consider a joint work and to deal with any outstanding works they may have before the highway work.
- Do not just rely on the quarterly coordination meetings. Arrange more regular meetings with works promoters to support coordination activity and joint works.
- Use permits to allow more flexibility in terms of working hours etc.

Thank you for reading this letter and the subsequent bulletins which have been agreed between the Department of Transport, HAUC England, and HAUC UK. We know you continue to do your very best to support your colleagues no matter which organisation you represent in these difficult and testing times.

Please also note that the Scottish, Northern Ireland, and Welsh Governments are issuing their own advice. for Scotland advice can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Best Regards

Peter Loft and David Latham

Joint Chairs HAUC England

Agreed by all parties including the DfT, HAUC UK, JAG, Street Works UK and DCMS

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