

New guidance for homeowners having work carried out in their home for maintenance and home improvements

By following several simple measures, you can ensure that work carried out in your home goes smoothly and safely.

Communicate before work begins

Keep in regular contact with your tradesperson in advance of any home visit to talk through details of the work being carried out and agree how risks can be reduced. You should let them know whether anyone in your household has symptoms of the virus, and check that your tradesperson is healthy too.

If you do have symptoms of the virus, or if you have been advised to shield yourself as you are classed as 'Clinically Extremely Vulnerable' by the Government, then only emergency and essential repairs can still go ahead and you should take additional safety measures – for instance, by avoiding face-to-face contact or by staying in another room.

Now could be a great time to explore going digital and using video quotes or fixes, where this suits both you and your tradesperson and it is safe to do so.

Take sensible precautions when work is carried out

- Clean surfaces around the working area and in 'high traffic' areas such as door handles with disinfectant before, during and after work is carried out.
- Keep internal doors open and minimise touching of door handles.
- If work is taking place in an area you use frequently, such as the stairs or kitchen, consider ways to avoid using that space when work takes place.
- Ask your tradesperson to bring their own mug, kettle or food and eat away from you, or in their van.
- Try to avoid too much face-to-face contact with those working in your home – ideally less than 15 minutes.
- Make sure any shared facilities, like toilets or kitchens, are thoroughly cleaned after each shift.
- Keep children or pets in other rooms while work is carried out, where possible.

We recommend that you keep in contact with suppliers for assurances that your deliveries will arrive as planned. As always, it's sensible to wait for materials to arrive before commencing a project.

Note: Effective following announcement by the Government on 10/05/2020.

For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/homes>

New guidance for tradespeople working safely in people's homes for maintenance and home improvements

Staying safe and ensuring the safety of tradespeople, engineers and customers is of paramount importance. We must all evaluate what additional measures we need to take to protect ourselves, our colleagues and our customers.

In line with Government guidance, completion of a risk assessment is recommended.

Communicate before work begins

Prior to visiting a customer, offer a video quotation or (if a minor issue) a video fix as an alternative to a visit where appropriate to do so and where the technology is available. Confirm that you and your colleagues have no symptoms of the virus and if in doubt, do not attend the customer's home. If you or your colleagues have any conditions which could be wrongly perceived as Covid-19 symptoms (for instance, a long-standing cough or hay fever) you may wish to take a Covid-19 test (if available) to offer your customers peace of mind.

Call your customer in advance to schedule the job and ensure that the customer and the household are free from the virus. No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield, unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household, i.e. an emergency or essential repair.

When working in a household where somebody is vulnerable (but has not been asked to shield e.g. where someone is over 70) prior arrangements should be made to avoid any face to face contact where possible.

Inform the customer in advance of the safety measures you plan to take while completing the jobs and these should, where relevant, include:

- Maintain appropriate social distancing, recommended 2 metres apart. If not possible for certain tasks, avoid close proximity between individuals for longer than 15 minutes at a time.
- Travel to the job separately from colleagues. If this isn't possible, stay with the same individuals throughout the journey and the job. Also, regularly clean vehicles and equipment and ensure adequate ventilation in the vehicle.
- Tools should not be shared between colleagues or if shared should be disinfected after use, clean all tools after each job.
- Allocate the same worker to the same household each time there is a visit.
- You may wear a face-covering in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible.
- Clean internal surfaces with disinfectant before and after the job.
- Wash hands and use hand sanitizer on arrival at the household and throughout the day.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched external surfaces including external door handles. Ask homeowners to open all internal doors before you arrive to minimise touching of door handles.
- Avoid using customers' toilet or kitchen facilities wherever possible and ensure good ventilation in the area that you are working.
- Bring your own food and drink to the home, consider taking breaks outdoors and eat away from the customer, or in your van.
- Do not engage with customers' children or pets while undertaking jobs.

If the customer is classed as "Clinically Extremely Vulnerable" by the Government, they've been told to continue shielding and self-isolate - only emergency work and essential maintenance should take place. If the customer is classed as "Clinically Vulnerable" because they are in an at risk group, work can take place but take additional precautions such as:

- For internal work, arrange for the customer to be in a different location in the property.
- If possible, avoid face to face contact with the vulnerable members of the household.
- Be extra vigilant with the use of disinfectant in all of the areas that you work in.

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