Guidance Regarding Site Operations and Construction During COVID-19

This document has been prepared by SafetyOn, the health and safety organisation for the onshore wind sector in the United Kingdom, in conjunction with RenewableUK. It has been prepared for use by the wider onshore wind industry and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with updates from Government, Health & Safety Executive and other relevant stakeholders as the situation regarding COVID-19 Pandemic evolves.

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<th>Version/Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>V3, 17 April 2020</td>
<td>O&amp;M guidance: further clarification on COVID19 incident reporting/Statutory inspections</td>
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<td><strong>New Guidance for Construction</strong></td>
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<td>V2, 03 April 2020</td>
<td>further clarification on transport in vehicles/ hygiene measures</td>
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As an essential contributor to the United Kingdom energy infrastructure, the onshore wind industry is critical to ensuring the provision of electricity as an essential service to homes and businesses across the UK, and as a key contributor to net zero carbon targets.

With COVID-19 declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 12 March 2020, SafetyOn has completed a review of existing systems of work associated with the construction of onshore wind to ensure existing and future construction activity can be executed safely. These guidelines have been developed in line with the following overriding principles:

− the health, safety and wellbeing of the public and industry employees are the primary considerations in whatever we do,

− it is accepted that the onshore wind industry provides an essential service relying on a critical workforce to do so. Therefore, we have an obligation to society to try to find a way to safely continue to operate, and in addition,

− there is also a need to try to safeguard the wider economy, although this is a secondary consideration to health and safety of both the public and those employed in the industry to assist the onshore wind industry’s workforce in delivering their activities safely during this unprecedent event,

To assist the onshore wind industry’s workforce in delivering their activities safely during this unprecedent event, these guidelines have been developed by the industry and are supported by the Health and Safety Executives of the UK. They will be regularly reviewed and updated in line with changes in government and regulatory guidance as well as evolving practices and learning from across the industry.

Sharing best practice will ensure safe working for the industry, and for the communities in which we operate.

Should you have feedback or comments regarding this document, or require further support, please contact SafetyOn at safetyon@energyinst.org

Lindsay McQuade
Chair
SafetyOn

Hugh McNeal
Chief Executive
RenewableUK
Guidance Regarding Site Operations and Activities During COVID-19

This document has been prepared by SafetyOn, the health and safety organisation for the onshore wind sector in the United Kingdom, in conjunction with RenewableUK. It has been prepared for use by the wider onshore wind industry and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with updates from Government, Health & Safety Executive and other relevant stakeholders as the situation regarding COVID-19 Pandemic evolves.
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1) Background and Overview

Further government or health guidance may supersede this note. In the event of any conflicts, please default to national health guidance issued by government including those that are devolved. Companies should be aware of any limitations on availability of emergency response personnel that may be notified in future by the HSE, HSE Northern Ireland, or emergency services and amend emergency response plans accordingly.

2) General Requirements

- Only personnel considered critical to delivering windfarm activities should travel to any site
- Travel to any site needs to be authorised by the employer; evidence for such an authorisation should be carried all times
- All personnel should check their personal health before leaving home. In the event of exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID 19 they should notify their employer, should not travel to work and begin self-isolation
- Employers should record self-reported current health status of their employees re: COVID-19 (i.e. any symptoms) and any relevant details from previous fourteen days
- In the event of becoming symptomatic or having a suspected case, personnel should share this information as soon as possible, with employers, site owners and other potentially affected personnel, and be fully transparent with any contact tracing measures required
- Where possible physical interactions between different colleagues should be avoided and where necessary limited to the absolute minimum required
- It is required to strictly limit the number of colleagues working with each other. Employers must risk assess local service team numbers in line with government guidance
- When multiple teams are on site working hours should be staggered and nominated times for tooling and specified workplaces be allocated
- All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is for the sole use of the individual. PPE shall never be shared
- Avoid exchanging personal items between colleagues such as mobile phone, laptop, pens etc.
- Organisations should have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance.
- Government guidance on social distancing, disinfecting, washing hands, hand sanitiser, symptoms, notifying should be adhered to at all times and can be found here
- Further guidance on hygiene at non-healthcare settings is provided here from the Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland
- In certain instances, cases of COVID-19 within the workplace may be reportable to the relevant regulator. More information can be found here
3) Site Operations and Activities

Prior to commencing works onsite and mobilisation of workers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate mitigation and controls are put in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 to both those working on site, and the communities in which onshore wind construction projects are located.

Transport

- Where possible:
  - personnel should travel to site independently of one another
  - the same personnel should work in the same teams every day and use the same vehicles
  - persons should not share vehicles, where suitable distancing cannot be achieved
- In the exceptions this cannot be achieved, and senior management review concludes that sharing a vehicle is necessary, consider any other appropriate measures and follow strict hygiene protocol from official sources
- Regularly disinfect all surfaces that could be touched by personnel

Service Centre, Equipment Stores or similar

- Where possible service teams must avoid visiting the service centre, equipment stores or similar
- If critical for the collection of tools / materials, the time spent in the service centre, equipment stores or similar should be minimised and / or staggered
- Organisations should consider scheduling visiting times or collections
- Personnel should observe social distancing guidelines wherever possible when working in the service centre, equipment stores or similar
- Where possible carry out any preparation works outside rather than inside the service centre, equipment stores or similar to avoid spending too much time in an enclosed and shared environment
- Tools which are shared by teams should be handled with clean gloves to avoid risk of spreading contamination and should be disinfected after use

Turbine and Substation

- Where possible, hand hygiene procedure following NHS guidance should be used at entry and exit points
- The first person to arrive at the turbine / sub-station should disinfect all door handles, light switches, handrails on stairs and another person should repeat this process when exiting
- While in the turbine maintain a 2-metre minimum separation by working in different areas; Where this cannot be achieved consider other appropriate measures and follow strict hygiene protocol at the end of the working period from official sources
- Wear suitable gloves at all times while working and regularly dispose of / clean them where appropriate
– Site Management should log all turbines being worked on and who has worked on them, should a technician become symptomatic consider restricting access to the turbines that the technician has been in

**Service Lift / Ladders**

– Technicians should not travel in the service lift together and must ensure they maintain sufficient social distancing at all times, while ensuring a suitable and sufficient means of communication

– Where service lifts are not present, gloves are to be worn when using ladders. Ladders are to be ascended as per training, i.e. one technician per ladder, and closing hatches when through them

– After use of the lift, all contact points within the service lift should be sprayed and / or wiped down with disinfectant, prior to use by a different technician

– Once use of service lift / ladders is complete technicians should use hand sanitiser to clean hands. Hand washing must take place as soon as reasonably possible afterwards

**Emergency Response**

– The rescue of any personnel on site is considered an emergency situation

– Social distancing guidelines cannot be respected during such activities in order to ensure life is preserved (e.g. first aid kits should be supplemented to include additional protective measures, such as face masks, gloves, etc.)

**Office/Desk Based Activities, Paperwork and Computer Related Tasks**

– All works not on the turbine or in the substation such as completion of reports, answering emails etc. should be completed at home
4) Workforce Competence

COVID-19 requires to be managed in addition to, and not in place of, requirements for training and competence for those attending an onshore wind site. COVID-19 will require certain enhancements to be made to ensure the risk is understood, mitigations are explained and adhered to and workers are competent to be on site. The following guidance is intended to ensure a consistent baseline across the industry.

Training and competence

– Competence training courses should be excluded unless adequate physical distancing can be implemented
– Organisations should assess whether training can be delivered online
– Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of competency certification
– Organisations should check with training providers on temporary measures, e.g. GWO has agreed to allow that:
  – Course participants unable to refresh previous training within the 24 months validity period, are granted an option to take the planned refresher training up until 60 days after expiry
  – Training Providers offering the refresher training to course participants under this exemption must contact GWO to receive further instructions
  – Please reference https://www.globalwindsafety.org/ for up to date details
– Skills fade can mean trained skill efficiency is reduced as they are not used during normal work (such as First Aid) or can mean gradual deviation from the correct and safe skills practices acquired during training, therefore companies should assess personnel competencies in relation to training certificate extensions

Medicals and Fitness to Work

– Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of medicals and fitness to work assessments

Issues and Concerns

– Personnel should be reminded of each organisation’s internal mechanisms to raise health and safety issues and concerns.
– Additional resources are provided on the HSE website here.
5) **Statutory inspections**

It is expected that some statutory inspections will still be available during the COVID-19 crisis. Where this is not possible or required a risk-based approach can be used to assess site equipment that may fall out of its inspection regime. The following three tier system maybe considered:

- **Tier One: Low Risk** – Where previous reports had shown minimal wear not near to its tolerance limits, with low usage then the period between could be extended;
- **Tier Two: Medium Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown some wear, but still above its tolerance limits with medium use then additional mitigation measures put in place prior to extending the interval between inspections. The additional mitigation measures could include visual inspection of components by a trained technician.
- **Tier Three: High Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown wear approaching the tolerance limits and additional usage then an alternative means of access would be required. If this to result in additional climbing then the additional health and safety risks would need to be managed including limiting and monitoring individual climb distances.

This approach would be consistent with the requirements of LOLER/ PSS. More information on the HSE website [here](#).

6) **Welfare and Arrangements**

Workers will require to adhere to strict health and safety guidance while on site to ensure their own, their colleagues and wider community protection from COVID-19. Measures such as those noted below should be deployed and adhered to by all workers onsite.

**Lunch & breaks**

- Break periods should be staggered between individual teams
- During lunch breaks personnel should maintain physical/ social distancing rules
- Canteen surfaces should be clear of all items so surfaces can be easily cleaned
- Personnel should bring their own lunch / drinks to site
- Personnel should clean up and disinfect area before and after use
- Wash all utensils in dishwasher or warm soapy water
- Personnel should wash hands following NHS guidance before and after lunch and breaks. If water is not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Where sanitiser is used hands should be washed using NHS guidance as soon as possible afterwards

**Mental Wellbeing**

- Stay informed through official sources and set limits for news and social media
- Keep up healthy routines such as exercise and diet
- Stay connected to others
- Try to anticipate distress and support each other
- Don’t make assumptions which may stigmatise an individual’s health

More information and advice on mental wellbeing can be found [here](#).
7) Communication with Communities and Local Stakeholders

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all personnel and ensure that our activities do not compromise in any way the health of the communities we work close to and within. It is essential that we are recognised as a “good and trusted neighbour”.

To this end, while the guidance cannot be prescriptive, all organisations should ensure effective communication and engagement with communities and local key stakeholders. This important aspect of our work should be considered at the planning stage and throughout the lifecycle of the project. The initiatives should be proportionate to the project scale, local geography and demographics. It is the responsibility of each organisation to determine what is the most effective fit and could include community liaison, use of social media, letter drops and engagement with community leaders.

In simple terms, our communities need to be “front of mind” in all that we do.
Guidance Regarding Construction
During COVID-19

This document has been prepared by SafetyOn, the health and safety organisation for the onshore wind sector in the United Kingdom, in conjunction with RenewableUK. It has been prepared for use by the wider onshore wind industry and will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment with updates from Government, Health & Safety Executive and other relevant stakeholders as the situation regarding COVID-19 Pandemic evolves.
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1) Background and Overview
Purpose of this guidance is to inform a safe system of work required to deliver construction activities in line with COVID-19 government guidance.

Further government or health guidance may supersede this note. In the event of any conflicts, please default to national health guidance issued by government including those that are devolved. Companies should be aware of any limitations on availability of emergency response personnel that may be notified in future by the HSE, HSE Northern Ireland, or emergency services and amend emergency response plans accordingly.

2) General Requirements
- Only personnel considered critical to delivering windfarm construction activities should travel to any site.
- Construction sites operating during the COVID-19 pandemic should protect the workforce – conforming with social distancing and hygiene requirements, or other appropriate mitigation.
- In travelling to and from an onshore wind construction site, workers should have regard to social distancing and necessary hygiene measures.
- Where workers require alternative accommodation due to the remoteness of the construction site versus their home, suitable arrangements should be made to comply with social distancing and hygiene measures.
- Teams or groups of workers may seek to secure suitable accommodation that would allow for co-habitation of workers from a particular construction site, with the same group able to commute to and from site.
- At an onshore wind construction site, all communal areas will have restricted access and adhere to strict social distancing requirements of 2 metres separation at all times.
- All personnel attending site should check their personal health before leaving for work, cognisant of the symptoms of COVID-19. In the event of exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19 they should notify their employer, should not travel to work, and begin a period of self-isolation.
- Employers should record self-reported current health status of their employees re: COVID-19 (i.e. any symptoms) and any relevant details from previous fourteen days.
- In the event of becoming symptomatic or having a suspected case, workers should share this information as soon as possible, with employers, site owners and other potentially affected personnel, and be fully transparent with any contact tracing measures required.
- In certain instances, cases of COVID-19 within the workplace may be reportable to the relevant regulator. Further information can be found here.
3) Onsite Construction

Prior to commencing works onsite and mobilisation of workers, steps should be taken to ensure that appropriate mitigation and controls are put in place to minimise risk of COVID-19 to both those working on site, and the communities in which construction projects are located.

This section of the guidance seeks to provide the industry with the baseline requirements that should be adhered to prior to works commencing.

Work Planning

Before heading to site or resuming works, additional planning will be required to manage the risks associated with COVID-19 and should consider:

- For remote locations worker accommodation may be required, can this be safely achieved in line with social distancing and hygiene requirements?
- Can workers get to the workplace safely is suitable transport available allowing for social distancing where possible?
- Is the site welfare set up to allow staff to take suitable breaks safely allowing for social distancing?
- Have all common points of potential physical contact been identified, and has suitable control measures been implemented?
- Has the workforce been made aware of the risks associated with COVID-19 and the measures in place to protect them?
- Has the first aid need assessment for site activities been reviewed to ensure additional measures are in place and potential limitation with emergency response capacity has been accounted for?
- Duty holders must review all work activities and amend the associated safe systems of work to account for COVID-19 risks, considering the following:
  - Eliminate the risk: is this task necessary at this time, or can it be postponed to a later date?
  - Is the level of staff involved in undertaking the work kept to a minimum? Can the task be carried out in line with the 2-metre rule?
  - If not, is there suitable and sufficient arrangements in place to mitigate COVID-19 risk i.e. personal hygiene measures/ sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) in place at the work location?
  - Has adequate time been allocated for undertaking the work while following amended arrangements?
  - Is there suitable and sufficient level of PPE available and in place at the work location?
  - Organisations should have in place effective arrangements for monitoring and reviewing their compliance with Government and industry guidance.

Transport and Mobility of Labour

- Where possible:
  - personnel should travel to site independently of one another

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the same personnel should work in the same teams every day and use the same vehicles
persons should not share vehicles, where suitable distancing cannot be achieved
In the exceptions this cannot be achieved, and senior management review concludes that sharing a vehicle is necessary, consider any other appropriate measures and follow strict hygiene protocol from official sources
Regularly disinfect all surfaces that could be touched by personnel

Site Works
Only personnel considered critical to windfarm construction activities should attend site
Planned plant servicing, where possible, shall be completed prior to plant arriving on site
Any contractors should consider their safe system of work in line with this document, and current COVID-19, government guidance, and update accordingly
Travel to an onshore wind construction site requires to be authorised by the employer; evidence of such authorisation should be carried all times by workers
Emergency arrangements should consider suitable contingencies for isolation and returning a suspected COVID-19 case to home from site
Where possible, physical interactions between different colleagues should be avoided.
It is required to strictly limit the number of colleagues working with each other. Employers should risk assess local service team numbers in line with government guidance
Small teams may be grouped and work together consistently. However, if necessary, an interaction beyond that group is required it should be conducted in line with social distancing requirement and/or such hygiene measures as to mitigate risk of infection. This may include a maximum time period if working indoors or a confined space.
When multiple teams are on site working hours should be staggered and nominated times for tooling and specified workplaces be allocated
All PPE is for the sole use of the individual. PPE shall never be shared or transferred between workers.
Avoid exchanging personal items between colleagues such as mobile phone, laptop, pens etc.
Government guidance on social distancing, disinfecting, washing hands, hand sanitiser, symptoms, notifying should be adhered to at all times and can be found here
Further guidance on hygiene at non-healthcare settings is provided here from the Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland

Equipment Stores or Similar
Where possible teams must avoid visiting equipment stores or similar
If critical for the collection of tools / materials, the time spent in equipment stores or similar should be minimised and / or staggered
Organisations should consider scheduling visiting times or collections
Personnel should observe social distancing guidelines wherever possible when working in equipment stores or similar

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– Where possible carry out any preparation works outside rather than inside equipment stores or similar to avoid spending too much time in an enclosed and shared environment
– Tools which are shared by teams should be handled with clean gloves to avoid risk of spreading contamination and should be disinfected after use

**Emergency Response**
– The rescue of any personnel on site is considered an emergency situation
– Social distancing guidelines cannot be respected during such activities in order to ensure life is preserved (e.g. first aid kits should be supplemented to include additional protective measures, such as face masks, gloves, etc.)
4) Welfare and Arrangements
Workers will require to adhere to strict health and safety guidance while on site to ensure their own, their colleagues and wider community protection from COVID-19. Measures such as those noted below should be deployed and adhered to by all workers onsite.

Canteen and Break Facilities
Existing welfare arrangements can continue to be used with social distancing guidelines to be applied and consideration should be given to an enhanced cleaning regime.

Where possible, all employees should bring sufficient pre-prepared food and drink for their own personal consumption with them from home each day. Any waste from this must be taken home by employees.

Dedicated eating areas should be identified on site to reduce food waste and contamination, employees will be allowed to eat (solo) in their cars or work vehicles, or within a designated canteen facility. This shall be agreed on a case by case basis with the site manager.

- Break periods should be staggered between individual teams
- During lunch breaks personnel should maintain physical/social distancing rules
- Canteen surfaces should be clear of all items, so surfaces can be easily cleaned
- Personnel should bring their own lunch/drinks to site
- Personnel should clean up and disinfect area before and after use
- Wash all utensils in dishwasher or warm soapy water
- Workers should wash hands following NHS guidance before and after lunch and breaks. If water is not available, hand sanitiser should be used. Where sanitiser is used hands should be washed in accordance with NHS guidance as soon as possible afterwards

Changing Facilities and Drying Rooms
- Staggered start and finish times will be adopted to strictly maintain social distancing
- Enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day will be put in place
- Only one employee will be allowed to use any changing or drying facility at any time to maintain the requirement for social distancing

Toilet and Sanitary Facilities
- Social distancing should be practised within toilet facilities
- Employees must wash/sanitise hands before and after using the facilities
- Site management should ensure toilets are being regularly cleaned and in addition, employees must use sanitising wipes to clean common points of contact particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush
- Portable toilets should be avoided wherever possible, but where in use these should be cleaned and emptied more frequently

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– Employees must use rubbish bins for hand towels

**Enhanced Cleaning**
– Enhanced cleaning procedures should be considered particularly in communal areas and at common points of contact, e.g.:
  – Taps and washing facilities
  – Toilet flush and seats
  – Door handles and push plates
  – Handrails on staircases and corridors
  – Food preparation and eating surfaces
  – Telephone equipment
  – Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment
Consideration should be given to additional measures for waste management should be put in place.

**Mental Wellbeing**
Your mental health is just as important as your physical health so all organisations should consider available tools and information available online or in your own business.
– Stay informed through official sources and set limits for news and social media
– Keep up healthy routines such as exercise and diet
– Stay connected to others
– Try to anticipate distress and support each other
– Don’t make assumptions which may stigmatise an individual’s health
More information and advice on mental wellbeing can be found [here](#).
5) Workforce Competence

COVID-19 requires to be managed in addition to, and not in place of, requirements for effective communication, training and competence for those attending an onshore wind construction site. COVID-19 will require certain enhancements to be made to ensure the risk is understood, mitigations are explained and adhered to and workers are competent to be on site. The following guidance is intended to ensure a consistent baseline across the industry.

Safety Inductions and Daily Briefings

– For new employees requiring site inductions, these should be carried out offsite where possible, where this cannot happen social distancing rules should apply
– Daily briefings / toolbox talks should take place to remind workers of specific COVID-19 protocols utilising available video messaging technologies
– Where this is not possible, they should be conducted in the open air with all employees maintaining social distancing. Site managers will mark out suitable areas where necessary
– Alternate methods of confirmation that site induction has been read and understood should be considered
– Please keep in contact with your workforce on site and keep up to date with company advice. Immediate stop any work if you have concerns and speak to management.

Issues and Concerns

– Personnel should be reminded of each organisation’s internal mechanisms to raise health and safety issues and concerns.
– Additional resources are provided on the HSE website here.

External Workforce and Consultants On site

Suitable arrangements should be in place to account for the external workforce supporting site considerations should be given to:

– Separation between delivery drivers and the rest of site
– Establishing designated offloading zones where possible
– Delivery drivers remaining in their vehicles if the load will allow it and washing or cleaning their hands before unloading goods and materials
– Where possible, specific toilets being allocated to external site visitors, and ensuring enhanced cleaning of these areas takes place
– Consultants engaged on site can remain in contact via mobile phone if possible or by maintaining strict adherence to the 2-metre exclusion zone if no signal is available and all reports to be issued electronically

Medicals and Fitness to Work

– Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of medicals and fitness to work assessments

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Training and Competence

- Competence training courses should be excluded unless adequate physical distancing or non-physical options can be implemented
- Organisations should assess whether training can be delivered online
- Organisations should take a risk-based approach regarding the extension of competency certification
- Organisations should check with relevant training providers and check with their accrediting body for any temporary measures in place,
- Skills fade can mean trained skill efficiency is reduced as they are not used during normal work (such as First Aid) or can mean gradual deviation from the correct and safe skills practices acquired during training, therefore companies should assess personnel competencies in relation to training certificate extensions
6) Communication with Communities and Local Stakeholders

Our priority is to ensure the safety of all personnel and ensure that our activities do not compromise in any way the health of the communities we work close to and within. It is essential that we are recognised as a “good and trusted neighbour”.

To this end, while the guidance cannot be prescriptive, all organisations should ensure effective communication and engagement with communities and local key stakeholders. This important aspect of our work should be considered at the planning stage and throughout the lifecycle of the project. The initiatives should be proportionate to the project scale, local geography and demographics. It is the responsibility of each organisation to determine what is the most effective fit and could include community liaison, use of social media, letter drops and engagement with community leaders.

In simple terms, our communities need to be “front of mind” in all that we do.

7) Statutory Inspections

It is expected that some statutory inspections will still be available during the COVID-19 crisis. Where this is not possible or required a risk-based approach can be used to assess site equipment that may fall out of its inspection regime. The following three tier system may be considered:

- **Tier One: Low Risk** – Where previous reports had shown minimal wear not near to its tolerance limits, with low usage then the period between could be extended;

- **Tier Two: Medium Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown some wear, but still above its tolerance limits with medium use then additional mitigation measures put in place prior to extending the interval between inspections. The additional mitigation measures could include visual inspection of components by a trained technician.

- **Tier Three: High Risk** – Where previous examinations had shown wear approaching the tolerance limits and additional usage then an alternative means of access would be required. If this to result in additional climbing, then the additional health and safety risks would need to be managed including limiting and monitoring individual climb distances.

This approach would be consistent with the requirements of LOLER/ PSS. More information on the HSE website [here](https://www.hse.gov.uk).
Appendix – Covid-19 Windfarm Critical Workers  
Work Details Summary Sheet

The following information provides relevant details for the travel of the Critical Worker. This covers between their home or maintenance base and the renewable energy projects in order to maintain and guarantee the supply of electricity to the nation.

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<td>Employer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance Base (if relevant)</td>
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<td>Windfarm name / location</td>
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<td>Windfarm Owner</td>
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<td>Owners contractor(s) (if relevant)</td>
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<td>Owner may contract services through other parties</td>
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