

ALL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 27, 28 AUGUST 2020

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well. This briefing is provided in response to the localised outbreaks of COVID-19 in Tayside and also in relation to the change in guidance from the Scottish Government around the wearing of face coverings within schools.

The recent local outbreaks at the 2 Sisters factory in Coupar Angus and at Kingspark School as well as positive cases in other schools in both the Dundee and Perth and Kinross areas serve as a reminder that none of us can become complacent against this virus. As of mid-August, all of our employees are back at work and I am pleased to report that no employee has contracted COVID-19 in the workplace which I believe is evidence that all the control measures that we have worked so hard to develop and put in place, are working effectively and are being complied with by employees.

Nevertheless, we must not drop our guard and must continue to remember that when both at work and in our personal lives, **things should not feel normal**. If this is case, then the likelihood is that you need to review your behaviours to ensure that you are not putting yourself and others at risk by not complying with the guidance.

Like everyone, I would be absolutely delighted to see life return to normal but unfortunately COVID-19 is going to be with us for sometime to come and so we need to ensure that we continue to follow the guidance put in place by the Scottish Government out with the workplace as well as within the workplace.

Please continue to follow the guidance laid out during your COVID-19 Tool Box Talk (as informed by Tayside Contracts' COVID-19 Safe Working Arrangements and Generic Risk Assessments) at all times as by doing this you are not only keeping yourself safe but those around you too.

In the event of an outbreak in one of our work locations, we will be guided by advice from the Tayside Health Protection Team (HPT) and the relevant Local Authority in relation to any measures and restrictions that must be placed on that location and the employees who work there. As we have seen with the recent outbreaks at the 2 Sisters factory and Kingspark School, the measures put in place are customised to the specific scenario and can be hard to predict and keep pace with given the significant and ever changing variables that there can be in relation to an outbreak. I absolutely recognise however that communication with the affected parties and the Trade Unions is paramount and therefore I undertake to ensure that managers do their utmost to ensure effective communication with all relevant parties should we find ourselves in this unfortunate position going forward. We are currently working with our colleagues in each of the 3 constituent Councils to ensure that the communication between the Education Departments and us allows for this in the event of any more outbreaks within the schools estate.

Face Coverings in Schools

It was announced by the Education Secretary, John Swinney on 25 August 2020 that from Monday 31 August 2020 pupils and adults in all secondary and special schools will need to wear a face covering when in corridors, communal areas or on school transport. This new guidance is in response to new WHO advice based on evidence that teenagers can infect others in the same way as adults and in light of emerging evidence suggesting that the wearer of a face covering may be offered a level of protection.

This new guidance impacts on all our school-based employees who over the course of their shift will be moving through both corridors and communal areas in order to carry out their duties. Specifically:

School Cleaning and Janitorial Employees

You will be expected to wear a face covering upon entering a school and when moving through or working in corridors and communal areas.

School Crossing Patrollers

You will be expected to wear a face covering upon entering a school and when moving through corridors and communal areas but will not be expected to wear one when outside on your crossing point unless you wish to do so.

School Catering Employees

You will be expected to wear a face covering upon entering a school and when moving through or working in corridors and communal areas but will not be expected or permitted to wear one within the school kitchen environment unless a risk assessment has determined that there is a need for this such as when physical distancing cannot be achieved. We recognise that some catering employees may wish to wear a face covering in the kitchen environment regardless and we are currently exploring this further with the relevant bodies to ensure that, should we permit this, food hygiene standards are not compromised in any way. A further communication and clarity on this specific element will be issued to catering employees shortly.

Exemptions

It is important to recognise that not everyone can wear a face covering. Individuals are exempt if:

- They have a disability or health condition that means they cannot put a covering on
- A covering will cause them severe distress or anxiety
- They need to communicate with someone who relies on lip reading
- They have a reasonable need to eat, drink or take medicine

There is no requirement to obtain evidence that you are exempt for example in the form of a letter from a doctor. If you have a condition which means you cannot wear a face covering please inform your line manager.

Provision and Use of Face Coverings

The guidance issued by the Scottish Government states that it is reasonable to expect that most individuals will now have access to re-usable face coverings due to their increasing use in wider society and therefore will be in a position to provide their own face covering for use. However, the possibility of provision of Tayside Contracts issued face coverings on request is currently being explored.

How should a face covering be worn?

- ✓ Wash a new face covering before you wear it, and after each use or at least once a day
- ✓ Wash your hands before and after putting on and taking off or adjusting your face covering
- ✓ Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when putting on, taking off or adjusting your face covering

- ✓ Discard used disposable face coverings responsibly or launder after each use if using a reusable covering
- ✓ Place used reusable face coverings in a bag until they can be washed and laundered
- ✓ Do not share face coverings with others, even people you live with
- ✓ Discard face coverings that have stretched out or no longer stays over your nose and mouth, has damaged ties or straps, or holes or tears in the fabric

Face coverings used should:

- ✓ Cover the nose and mouth and fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- ✓ Be secured to the head with ties, straps, or ear loops, or wrapped around the lower face
- ✓ Include multiple layers while allowing for breathing without restriction
- ✓ Be able to be cleaned regularly without damage or change to shape

Face coverings used should NOT:

- X Be football scarfs
- X Be offensive, concerning to the public or compromise the professional image of organisation
- X Interfere with or compromise existing control measures
- X Be worn in a kitchen environment due to food hygiene standards (unless issued by Tayside Contracts as part of a risk assessment process)

Should you have any questions about any of the topics covered in this briefing or are seeking support please do not hesitate to contact your line manager. Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website www.tayside-contracts.co.uk on a regular basis to check for further updates.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Iain C Waddell, Managing Director, 28 August 2020