Vehicles, Machines and Equipment - Working Safely during COVID-19 Guidance
Introduction

This document is to provide guidance on the restarting and ongoing operation of the Agencies’ Vehicles, Machines and Equipment (VME) during the COVID-19 restrictions. The guidance is based on the Government Working Safely During Coronavirus (COVID-19) document and aims to protect our workforce and minimise the spread of COVID-19.

This document also covers the potential risks and steps needed to keep staff safe during the course of operating VME as part of their day to day activities. It is therefore important that you read fully the guidance in this document.

Should you have any VME specific queries, please direct them in the first instance to your local MES Workshop.

Purpose

This document details the potential risks and the required steps to be taken to safely operate our vehicles, machines and equipment, while still maintaining physical distancing.

As an employer we have a legal duty under ‘The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020’ namely -

(a) take all reasonable measures to ensure that a distance of two metres is maintained between any persons on the premises (except between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer),

(b) take all reasonable measures to ensure that it only admits people to its premises in sufficiently small numbers to make it possible to maintain that distance,

(c) take all reasonable measures to ensure that a distance of two metres is maintained between any person waiting to enter its premises (except between two members of the same household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer).

It is therefore essential you familiarise yourself with and understand the
Scope
This document covers all Agency vehicles (cars and vans), CAPES and grey fleet cars, machines and equipment including, harvesting and nursery machines and mechanical equipment and tools.

When considering how to apply this guidance, you must take into account agency workers, contractors, other visitors in addition to our employees.

This document and associated risk assessments are to ensure we meet our legal duties under ‘The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020’ and other health and safety legislation.

We must also meet our existing legal obligations, including those relating to individuals with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The guidance also contains non-statutory guidance to take into account when complying with these existing obligations.

Should you have any VME specific queries, please direct them in the first instance to your local MES Workshop.

Principles
The guidance is based on the following principles:

- Staff and visitor safety is our primary concern
- Staff will work from home wherever possible
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing and keeping 2 metres apart at all times
- Good personal hygiene and work place hygiene are key
- Reduce the use of shared vehicles, machines and equipment and other high touch items
- Take a risk based approach
- Vehicles and equipment will be utilised in a prioritised manner in line with business activities
Ongoing review and support will be provided to local staff

This guidance and supporting documents will be updated over time as scientific data and government advice is revised. Please check for updates: http://saltire/news/Pages/Coronavirus-updated-advice-for-employees.aspx

When to use this guidance
The following guidance and procedures are to be followed when the Regional Manager, Cost Centre Manager or Conservator gives consent to return to active duty.

How to use this guidance
This document sets out guidance on how to use our VME safely. It sets out our objective and gives some practical considerations of how this can be achieved.

To help you decide which actions to take, you need to carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as you would for other health and safety related hazards. Generic risk assessments have been created by FLS HS&W team and can be found http://saltire/my-workplace/Pages/My-Workplace.aspx#/Health%2C%20safety%20and%20wellbeing
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1. Assessing and Managing risk

Objective: To assess risk and reduce it to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority.

Everyone needs to assess and manage the risks of COVID-19. We must work with any other employees who may be sharing VME so that everybody's health and safety is protected. Protecting people from COVID-19 and ensuring driving at work is carried out safely is our main priority.

We can achieve this by:

- Working from home where possible
- Considering whether your journey is necessary - can the work be carried out without travel?
- Increasing the frequency of handwashing and sanitising, especially before you begin each journey and after any stop during the journey.
- One person per vehicle wherever possible
- Taking all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing, keeping people 2 metres apart wherever possible
- Where the social/physical distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, consider whether that activity needs to continue, and if so, take all actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between workers
- Limiting the sharing of equipment and clean regularly touched surfaces
2. Using VME Safely

**Objective:** To ensure the safety of all staff, to include arriving at and departing from work, while in work and when travelling between sites.

We must take all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing, keeping people 2 metres apart wherever possible. For vehicles this means that if the vehicle is large enough (e.g. mini bus or crew cab) then these may be shared, with good ventilation. For smaller vehicles and machines this means they should be driven/operated on a one person per vehicle wherever possible.

**We can achieve this by:**

- Considering whether your journey is necessary
- One person per vehicle wherever possible
- Cleaning vehicles and equipment before and after each use
- Use of pool vehicles to ensure enough transport is available
- Planning work to limit travel as much as possible
- Where larger vehicles are shared limiting this to fixed groups of people

**Pre start checks**

If your vehicle has been idle for several weeks there is a likelihood that the battery may be flat or the brakes are seized. If the vehicle fails to start or the brakes are seized contact your local MES Workshop for further advice.

If the vehicle has not been used for some time it is important that the vehicle is thoroughly checked before being driven off. As a minimum you should:
- **Check oil and fluid levels**: check for any oil or coolant leaks prior to starting out and once again after the vehicle has been driven for the first time.

- **Check tyres**: condition, tyre pressure and tread depths. Tyres will slowly lose air when the vehicle is not used and pressures should be checked once the vehicle has been driven.

- **Lights and lenses**: Check that all lights including brakes and indicators are working before driving off.

If you start driving and something doesn’t feel or sound right stop and contact your local MES Workshop for further advice. Do NOT continue to drive until you have been advised it is safe to do so.

### Cleaning

**Objective:** To keep VME clean and prevent transmission of COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces

Good hygiene measures form a key principle for preventing the spread of COVID-19. This guidance should be followed when either getting into or leaving a vehicle, or when using equipment, and should be adhered to at all times.

### Cleaning Sole Use VME

For sole use VME, where it is not shared between drivers or operators or used for passengers, controls and high touch areas should be kept clean and the cabin clear of personal equipment and rubbish. It is good practice to follow COVID-19 hygiene measures of keeping touch areas clean by regular wiping with sanitising wipes, and following good personal hygiene measures.

The interior of all vehicles should be cleaned weekly as a minimum, including brushing or hoovering of dust/mud from foot wells and upholstery.
Always ensure there are sufficient quantities of hand sanitiser/wipes within cabins and in work areas to ensure users can clean hands and surfaces.

**Cleaning Shared Vehicles**

**Objective:** To keep vehicles clean and prevent transmission of COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces

For any vehicle which is shared between drivers (pooled) or for carrying passengers, cleaning and disinfection must be undertaken using disposable cloths and wipes using an appropriate sanitiser. All cloths and wipes used must be disposed of and should be put into waste bags.

All personal items, waste, food wrappers etc must be removed from the vehicle between users.

Ensure that all waste items that have been in contact with an individual (e.g. used tissues and wrappers) in the vehicle are disposed of securely within disposable bags.

The interior of all vehicles should be cleaned weekly as a minimum, and where possible brushing or hoovering of dust/mud from foot wells and upholstery.

**We can achieve this by:**

- Providing adequate wipes, sanitiser and cleaning products
- Keeping the driver and passenger areas clear of equipment, personal items and rubbish to allow for thorough cleaning of the vehicle cabin
- Regular cleaning of touch surfaces with sanitising cloths
- Thorough cleaning of the vehicle before and after each user or passenger
- Following good personal hygiene, sanitising hands regularly and avoiding touching your face
It is essential the following areas are cleaned for pool vehicles which are shared between users, or for the carrying of passengers, before and after each use:

**Exterior**
- key/key fob
- door handle/frame (including rear doors)
- fuel cap
- bonnet catch, if used
- under bonnet items (washer cap, dipstick, etc), if used

**Interior**
- full dashboard, including dash top and instrument panel
- rear view mirror
- gear knob
- air con/ventilation/heating controls
- steering column/wheel and stalks
- accessory panel, centre console and radio
- cup holders and compartments
- seats, door, door pockets and doorjambs including grab handles
- glovebox and other storage compartments

You should also follow the government guidance ensuring personal hygiene is maintained and hands are regularly washed and sanitised and ensuring you do not touch your face.

*If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance [here](#)*
Cleaning Mobile Plant including Harvesting Machines

Objective: To keep mobile plant clean and prevent transmission of COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces

Where possible one operator per machine rule should be implemented. If there is no option but to share the machine both operators should follow the clean down process. Good hygiene measures should be followed when either getting into or leaving a machine and this should be adhered to at all times.

We can achieve this by:

- Providing adequate wipes, sanitiser and cleaning products
- Keeping the operator areas clear of equipment, personal items and rubbish to allow for thorough cleaning of the cabin
- Regular cleaning of touch surfaces with sanitising cloths
- Thorough cleaning of the machine before and after each user
- Following good personal hygiene, sanitising hands regularly and avoiding touching your face

The following areas must be cleaned between each user:

Exterior
- key/key fob
- door handle/frame (including rear doors)
- grab rails
- panel catches
- fuel pumps and touch parts on couplings
- under bonnet items (dipstick, etc)

Interior
- full dashboard, including dash top and instrument panel
- air con/ventilation/heating controls
all interior windows
steering column/wheel and stalks (if applicable)
accessory panel, centre console and radio
seats, door, door pockets and doorjambs including grab handles
storage compartments
any other exposed surfaces in the machine

You should also follow the government guidance ensuring personal hygiene is maintained and hands are regularly washed and sanitised ensuring you do not touch your face.

*If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance [here](#)*

**Hand Operated Small Plant and Equipment**

**Objective:** To keep plant and equipment clean and prevent transmission of COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces

Where possible operation of plant and equipment should be allocated to, and operated by one person. Good hygiene measures should be followed when picking up and leaving equipment and this should be adhered to at all times.

**We can achieve this by:**

- Providing adequate wipes, sanitiser and cleaning products
- Regular cleaning of touch surfaces with sanitising cloths
- Thorough cleaning of equipment and controls before and after each use
- Following good personal hygiene, sanitising hands regularly and avoiding touching your face

Before and during operation the operator should sanitise any touch points such as:
You should also follow the government guidance ensuring personal hygiene is maintained and hands are regularly washed and sanitised ensuring you do not touch your face.

*If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then you should refer to the specific guidance [here](#)*

### 3 Servicing, repairs and breakdowns

**Agency vehicles, plant and equipment**

**Objective:** To ensure VME servicing, repairs and breakdowns are carried out in a safe manner for the driver and mechanic, taking all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing and keeping 2 metres apart at all times

Existing guidance on vehicle breakdown and recovery can be found [here](#)

We can achieve this by:

- Contacting your local Workshop Manager or Service Manager who will advise on the course of action and if the item needs to be brought into the local workshop or will be repaired on site
- Implementing a procedure on the drop off and collection of items of VME at the workshop which will be advised when you contact them
- Provision of a relief vehicle for the driver at the point of breakdown to prevent vehicle sharing, where possible
- Taking all reasonable steps to maintain physical distancing. Each job will be individually assessed and where two people are required to complete a repair and physical distancing cannot be achieved a risk assessment will be undertaken
- Ensuring the machine operator is in attendance on site. Mechanics will not go into the cab of the machine unless the repair requires this to be done.
- Providing adequate wipes, sanitiser, cleaning products and additional PPE where required
- Providing clear contacts for the local workshop detailing who to contact and when

**CAPES and Grey Fleet**

MES will not attend breakdowns involving CAPES or Grey Fleet vehicles. Drivers will need to contact the company authorised through the lease company or their own breakdown provider for this service and follow their guidance.

## 4 Refuelling

**Objective:** To ensure VME is refuelled in accordance with Government guidelines as handles and hoses have been identified as high risk touchpoints

**Refuelling Vehicles**

When re-fuelling a vehicle, gloves provided at the point of refuelling should be worn at all times when handling the fuel pump. Once complete, hands should
be washed with soap and water or use hand sanitiser and good personal hygiene measures followed, avoiding touching your face.

**Charging Electric Vehicles**

When charging an electric vehicle disposable gloves should be worn when handling the charging cables, plug and charging unit if available. Once complete, hands should be sanitised and avoid any contact with mouth or eyes.

**Refuelling Machines and Equipment**

Gloves should be worn at all times when refuelling.

Once complete, hands should be washed with soap and water (or use hand sanitiser) and avoid any contact with mouth or eyes.

**5 Carrying passengers**

**Objective:** To ensure passengers are carried in a safe manner for the driver and passengers, taking all reasonable measures to ensure physical distancing and keeping 2 metres apart at all times.

Where vehicles are large enough to carry passengers while maintaining 2 metres physical distancing, or where a situation occurs when a passenger must be carried in a vehicle all reasonable steps must be taken to maintain physical distancing.

**We can achieve this by:**
• Considering whether your journey is necessary
• One person per vehicle wherever possible
• Using 2 vehicles to carry out the operation
• Using a bigger vehicle where possible such as a larger van or minibus where individuals can sit 2 metres apart
• Maximising separation of individuals by seating in the rear and opposite corners
• Increasing ventilation where possible
• Using a fixed partnering system if people have to travel together
• Ensuring vehicle cleaning guidance is strictly followed
• Following good personal hygiene, keeping hands sanitised, not touching your face, limiting touching surfaces in the vehicle and catching coughs and sneezes in tissues (or elbow)
• Not sitting face to face

Alternatives such as physical screens between the driver and passenger are being reviewed, but at this time there is currently limited evidence about the effectiveness of temporary screens in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. There is also a lack of clarity about the safety of fitting these types of screens in vehicles, how they react in the event of an accident or whether they meet the relevant safety legislation. These are therefore not recommended at this time, but this is being reviewed on an ongoing basis.