

PROTOCOL

Working together Safely

Construction and infrastructure

The Working Together Safely protocol is supported by: Aedes, AFNL-NOA, Bouwend Nederland, CNV Vakmensen, FNV Bouwen en Wonen, FNV Metaal, GeoBusiness, NEPROM, NVB bouw, NVKL, OnderhoudNL, VEBIDAK, Wij Techniek, Techniek Nederland, VHG, VIB, Waterbouwers and Woonbond.

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Overview of changes

The 'Working Together Safely' protocol is frequently adjusted in line with new developments. This page provides details of the changes in relation to the previous version.

Changes with effect from 30-6-2020

Adjusting guidelines for travelling together

The guidelines for travelling together have changed. Travelling together is permitted again with effect from 1st July, providing a reservation system/planning is in place, a health check has been conducted before getting in and all occupants are wearing non-medical face masks. The following paragraphs have been adjusted accordingly: 2.4.1 and 4.5.

Changes with effect from 24-6-2020

Any changes in relation to the previous version have been underlined in the protocol text for the sake of clarity.

Working for vulnerable private individuals

It's now also possible to carry out regular activities for private individuals who form part of the vulnerable groups, as long as they have provided their explicit permission for this. The following paragraphs have been adjusted accordingly: paragraph 2.1.3 has been added, the heading for paragraph 2.1.4 has been changed and paragraph 4.2.2 has been changed.

Criteria for staying at home

The criteria for staying at home where any possible symptoms are concerned have changed. In addition, corona tests are now widely available and recommended for people with flu-like symptoms. The following paragraphs have been adjusted accordingly: 1.1, 3.1, 3.4 and 2.1.1.1.

Ventilation in a vehicle

The advice for ventilation in the car has been adjusted to prevent damage to health as a result of extreme airflow. The following paragraphs have been adjusted accordingly: 2.4.1.2 and 4.5.

Use of water and soap rather than disinfectants

Excessive use of disinfectants is harmful to the skin. It's now clear we should be using water and soap to wash our hands wherever possible. Many disinfectants also contain ethanol ("alcohol denat."), which is a substance on the list of carcinogenic substances and processes issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Ethanol should therefore only be used in the workplace if there is no alternative. The following paragraphs have been adjusted accordingly: 1.2, 2.2.2.2, 2.4.1.2, 4.1 and 4.5.

Possibility for people without a company doctor to establish contact with a company doctor from the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk

People without their own company doctor (for example, self-employed people) can use the company doctors from the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk. The following paragraph has been adjusted accordingly: 3.5.

This protocol offers clarity to businesses, residents, clients and customers and all workers regarding safe working procedures in the construction, engineering and installation sectors during the coronavirus crisis. It also addresses how work in private properties can be carried out safely. The protocol was drawn up by Bouwend Nederland and Techniek Nederland and submitted to the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations and subsequently supplemented and established in consultation with the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations and the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, as well as various other construction sectors and trade unions. You can find the original protocol on the National Government's [website](#). The protocol is now being maintained and adjusted where necessary by social partners in construction and engineering. You can find the most recent changes to the measures in the overview of changes.

The protocol's starting point is the advice and measures established by the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). The protocol is based on the state of play at the time of publication and will be amended as soon as possible when new advice or measures take effect. The protocol is intended as a guide to carrying out work safely. However, there may be justifiable reasons to deviate from the protocol in certain circumstances.

The protocol is intended for the construction and engineering sectors and associated activities. Consult the RIVM website for general measures and guidelines regarding what to do in case of a confirmed (or suspected) coronavirus infection.

A Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk has been set up, which can be accessed via: www.helpdeskcorona-bt.nl. This is a central desk where people can ask questions, obtain information and report breaches of the rules set out in this "working together safely" protocol.

It's everyone's joint responsibility to combat the spread of the virus, while also ensuring people can continue to work safely. We can only stop the virus from spreading and ensure not all activities have to come to an immediate standstill if we all work together. We hope everyone will responsibly adhere to the protocol's guidelines and actively discuss situations where this is difficult to do.

The protocol's starting point

This protocol is based on the occupational hygiene strategy. The aim is to minimise the need to use the limited supply of personal protective equipment, except in specific environments such as care institutions. The strategy consists of first introducing measures to prevent working in environments with a risk of infection. If that is not possible, i.e. if it is necessary to carry out work in places where there is a risk of infection, technical and organisational measures must be put in place to prevent infection. Lastly, there are specific situations and environments where it will always be necessary to use PPE.

Additional care must be taken when carrying out work in buildings where residents or building users are present. Prior consent from the residents or users is required, especially if the residents or users form part of vulnerable groups. The work will not be deemed safe to be carried out if they do not provide their consent.

The following pages set out the protocol and its implementation, after which a number of aspects are looked at in more detail. Various checklists, whereby the protocol has been incorporated into a daily routine, can be found on the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk's [website](#).

1 General measures for the construction and engineering sector

1.1 Measures to control the risk at source

- Work from home if your position allows for this.
- Do not go to work if you or someone you live with is infected with the coronavirus.
- Do not go to work if you have:
 - o Flu-like symptoms
 - o A (slight) cough
 - o A fever or a raised temperature
 - o A sudden loss of smell or taste.
- Request a test as soon as possible with any of the above symptoms. Consult with the company doctor if necessary.
 - o Go to work in case of a negative test (no corona) and mild symptoms.
 - o Stay at home in case of a negative test and a cold, cough, shortness of breath, a raised temperature or fever.
- Have you opted not to get tested even if you do have the above symptoms? Then only go back to work if you have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- Don't go to work if someone you live with has a fever and/or shortness of breath and you haven't yet received the results from the corona test. Employees without symptoms can go back to work if the test confirms this does not involve a corona infection.
- Only go back to work once a non-tested person living with you has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

The exception to this is an employee in a crucial role or involved in a critical process.¹ The following applies to this employee:

- Do not go to work if you are infected with the coronavirus.
- Do not go to work if someone you live with is infected with the coronavirus. An exception may be made if you don't have any symptoms yourself, in consultation with the GGD and your GP.
- Do not go to work if you have any symptoms.
- Discuss the matter with your employer if someone you live with has any symptoms (but not corona).

1.2 Technical and organisational measures

- Do not shake hands.
- Regularly wash your hands with soap and water.² Wash your hands at least 6x a day, in accordance with the instructions provided. And always before meals, after going to the toilet, after using public transport and after cleaning.
- Touch your face as little as possible, cough/sneeze into your elbow, bring your own paper tissues. Dispose of these immediately after use. Then wash your hands.
- Stay 1.5 metres away from others while at work wherever possible.³
- Make sure you adapt your work and your workplace accordingly.

¹ Critical processes and crucial roles: please refer to the information issued by the National Government <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/veelgestelde-vragen-over-coronavirus-en-kinderopvang/cruciale-beroepen> and VNO-NCW <https://www.vno-ncw.nl/weekbulletin/extra-info-lijst-cruciale-beroepen-voor-noodopvang-kinderen>

² Please note: regularly washing or disinfecting your hands will decrease the skin. This will reduce your home's barrier function. Therefore make sure you regularly use nourishing hand cream too.

³ This also applies, for example, during lunch and when dealing with supplier deliveries.

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- Insist on strict observance of the RIVM's hygiene guidelines if working at less than 1.5 metres is unavoidable.⁴
 - Regularly clean with water and a good degreasing cleaning agent, possibly in the form of disposable cleaning wipes. Avoid ethanol ("alcohol denat.") and preferably don't use products containing isopropyl alcohol.
 - Don't share your tools or telephone with others.
 - Keep materials, tools and PPE clean.
 - Ventilate workspaces and offices.
 - Work in fixed teams as much as possible.

1.3 Personal protective equipment

All hygiene precautions.⁵

⁴ The aim should always be a distance of 1.5 metres. This is predominantly about increasing people's awareness at the workplace. The RIVM's hygiene guidelines will apply if people have no choice but to be less than 1.5 metres apart. Questions can be submitted to the Help Desk for specific cases.

⁵ In accordance with the RIVM's guidelines.

2 Specific sectors or work situations

All of the following measures are in addition to the general measures listed in paragraphs 1.1 - 1.3.

2.1 Carrying out work for private individuals and housing association tenants/property owners.

2.1.1 General

The following preventative measures always need to be followed when working for private individuals.

2.1.1.1 *Measures to control the risk at source*

Beforehand:

- Explicitly request consent for access from residents/tenants/users. Residents will determine whether or not they are happy to provide access to their property.
- Ask customers/users whether they, or any other people living in the property, have had a fever and/or shortness of breath symptoms over the past 24 hours and whether they form part of the vulnerable people category.⁶
- Ask customers to properly ventilate the property.
- Ask customers to ensure the equipment is easily accessible.

2.1.1.2 *Technical and organisational measures*

- Customers must stay at least 1.5 metres away from employees.
- Limit the visit to essential work.
- Avoid customers having to touch any devices or documents when signing off work as much as possible.

2.1.1.3 *Personal protective equipment*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.3 where personal protective equipment is concerned.

2.1.2 Customers/users or people living with them without coronavirus symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever) and do not form part of a vulnerable group either.

2.1.2.1 *Measures to control the risk at source*

- Regular work can be carried out with the residents or users' consent. The national measures concerning hygiene and keeping a safe distance must be observed.

2.1.2.2 *Technical and organisational measures*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.2 where technical and organisational measures are concerned.

2.1.2.3 *Personal protective equipment*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.3 where personal protective equipment is concerned.

⁶ In accordance with the RIVM's definition, particularly the elderly and people with existing medical conditions.

2.1.3 Customers/users or people living with them without coronavirus symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever), but who do form part of a vulnerable group.

2.1.3.1 Measures to control the risk at source

Regular work can be carried out, but only with the residents or users' explicit consent. The measures concerning hygiene and keeping a safe distance must be observed, see paragraphs 1 and 2.1.1.

2.1.3.2 Technical and organisational measures

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.2 where technical and organisational measures are concerned.

2.1.3.3 Personal protective equipment

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.3 where personal protective equipment is concerned.

2.1.4 Customers/users or people living with them with the coronavirus, or displaying corona symptoms (cough, sore throat, fever)

2.1.4.1 Measures to control the risk at source

Only carry out work in case of a serious fault or emergency. Serious means if general daily essential tasks (cooking, using the toilet, washing, cleaning, etc.) can no longer be completed.

2.1.4.2 Technical and organisational measures

- The external door is open, or is opened by someone else from the outside.
- Customers must stay in a different room.
- Communicate with the customer by phone if necessary.

2.1.4.3 Personal protective equipment

For additional protection, consider using:

- Disposable gloves⁷, any type of quality will suffice
- Disposable overall
- Disposable slippers
- Safety goggles (disposable ones, or otherwise disinfect)

2.2 External locations (infrastructure, construction, utilities)

2.2.1 Working alone on location.

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraphs 1.1 - 1.3 and 2.1.1 where working alone at an external location is concerned.

2.2.2 Working on location with several people.

2.2.2.1 Measures to control the risk at source

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.1 where the measures to control the risk at source are concerned.

2.2.2.2 Technical and organisational measures

In the site hut or meeting room:

⁷ For example, nitrile, PVC, latex, butyl rubber

- Clearly display rules and instructions.
- Determine the maximum number of people who can be in the space while still staying 1.5 metres apart.
- Remember to also maintain a distance of 1.5 metres when entering a space.
- Stagger break times or provide multiple break areas.
- When instructing staff and giving toolbox talks, make sure everyone can stay 1.5 metres apart. If necessary, issue instructions several times to smaller groups.
- Inform staff and meeting participants of the measures beforehand.
- Ensure spaces are cleaned more often and that soap and disposable hand towels are available.
- Meetings with suppliers, subcontractors and clients: Establish telephone contact whenever possible.

2.2.2.3 *Personal protective equipment*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.3 where personal protective equipment is concerned.

2.3 Healthcare facilities

2.3.1 Low-risk spaces⁸

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraphs 1.1 - 1.3 and 2.1.1 where working in low-risk spaces within a healthcare facility is concerned.

2.3.2 High-risk spaces⁹

The following measures apply in addition to the measures included in paragraphs 1.1 - 1.3 and 2.1.1 where working in high-risk spaces in a healthcare facility is concerned:

- Follow the client's instructions.

2.3.3 Air treatment systems in intensive care or the pulmonary unit.

2.3.3.1 *Measures to control the risk at source*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.1 where the measures to control the risk at source are concerned.

2.3.3.2 *Technical and organisational measures*

There are no additional measures in addition to the measures included in paragraph 1.2 where technical and organisational measures are concerned.

2.3.3.3 *Personal protective equipment*

If discharged air can be inhaled, use an FFP2 mask.

⁸ Areas where there are no (potentially) infected patients, areas not frequented by healthcare personnel who could be infected.

⁹ This could include a triage tent, a nursing home room with an unwell resident, an IC area, areas where a droplet precaution regime is in place.

2.4 Travelling together

2.4.1 All forms of business transport

2.4.1.1 *Measures to control the risk at source*

- A health check will be conducted before getting in. Travelling together is not permitted if anyone is experiencing (mild) symptoms, as detailed under paragraph 1.1. The colleague with symptoms will need to stay at home until he has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

2.4.1.2 *Technical and organisational measures*

- Travelling together must be done in accordance with a reservation system. This can be filled in by centrally planning any joint travel. Unscheduled colleagues will not be able to travel. This is necessary to be able to check which employees have been in close contact with each other afterwards.
- Make sure there is plenty of ventilation, but avoid heavy air flows.
- Ensure optimal hygiene by subjecting the controls to extra cleaning (steering wheel, gear lever, door handle, touch screen, etc) with water and a good degreasing cleanser or moist cleaning wipes.

2.4.1.3 *Personal protective equipment*

All passengers must wear a non-medical face mask.

2.5 Communication

The national government has an extensive amount of campaign resources (posters, flyers, etc) explaining the RIVM guidelines and providing practical instructions on how to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. You can download these via [this link](#). You can use these posters and flyers both within your company and at your construction site. There is also information material available for people with low literacy levels. Social partners have their own channels of communication (e.g. via the [Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk](#), [Vollandis](#) and [ArboTechniek](#)). Posters about the protocol for restricting the spread of the coronavirus, in relation to construction sites, working in private properties and working at the office, are available in several languages and can be downloaded from the help desk website. The help desk can also provide practical information such as frequently asked questions, toolboxes, daily schedules and posters/flyers about working and travelling together and for customers.

3 General measures and regulations

3.1 General

Activities in the construction and engineering sector can also continue during the current corona period. However, it goes without saying you need to comply with the RIVM guidelines, not just on site, but also when travelling to and from work.

- Stay at least 1.5 metres from others.
- Do not shake hands.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Stay at home if you have:
 - o Flu-like symptoms
 - o A (slight) cough
 - o A fever or a raised temperature
 - o A sudden loss of smell or taste.
- Request a test as soon as possible with any of the above symptoms. Discuss things with the company doctor if necessary.
 - o Go to work in case of a negative test (no coronavirus) and mild symptoms.
 - o Stay at home in case of a negative test and a cold, cough, shortness of breath, a raised temperature or fever.
- Have you opted not to get tested even if you do have the above symptoms? Then only go back to work if you have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- Don't go to work if someone you live with has a fever and/or shortness of breath and you haven't yet received the results from the corona test. You can go back to work if the test shows this doesn't involve a corona infection, providing you don't have any symptoms yourself.
- Only go back to work once a non-tested person living with you has been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- Sneeze or cough into your elbow.
- Use paper tissues to blow your nose and throw these away immediately.

This protocol provides general frameworks and guidelines. If you're unsure about how to comply with this, contact your employer, client or company. You can also contact the help desk for advice.

3.2 Translating the advice into daily work routines

It's important to effectively translate the protocol into a daily work routine. Below is an outline of the practical measures to be taken in the workplace and while at work. Complete checklists can be found on the help desk's website.

3.3 Appoint a corona-responsible person at the workplace

Following the rules is first and foremost everyone's own responsibility. Appoint an employee to oversee compliance with the protocol on site to ensure everyone takes this responsibility seriously. He/she can monitor compliance with the protocol. The person in question must be familiar with all the corona rules and must – when necessary – call employees to account at the workplace if they fail to comply with them.

3.4 When should employees stay at home?

1. When the employee, or someone living with him/her, has been diagnosed with the coronavirus.
2. When the employee is displaying any symptoms, such as a cold, a runny nose, sneezing, a sore throat, a (slight) cough, a raised temperature, a fever (38 degrees Celsius or higher) or in

case of a sudden loss of smell or taste. The employee is advised to be tested for the coronavirus as soon as possible. The employee can return to work if the test comes back negative (no coronavirus), unless he/she is suffering from a cold, cough, shortness of breath or fever. Discuss things with the company doctor if necessary.

3. Don't go to work if someone you live with has a fever and/or shortness of breath and you haven't yet received the results from the corona test. Employees without symptoms can go back to work if the test confirms this does not involve a corona infection.

The exception to points 1, 2 and 3 are employees who have a crucial role or who are involved with a critical process.¹⁰ The following applies to them:

- Do not go to work if you are infected with the coronavirus.
- Do not go to work if someone you live with is infected with the coronavirus. An exception may be made if you don't have any symptoms yourself, in consultation with the GGD and your GP.
- Do not go to work if you have any symptoms.
- Discuss the matter with your employer if someone you live with has any symptoms (but not corona).

3.5 Assessing whether someone forms part of an at-risk group

Consult the company doctor/occupational health specialist if it's not clear whether someone forms part of an at-risk group. People without their own company doctor (for example, self-employed people) can use the company doctors from the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk.

3.6 When should employees go home?

Anyone on site and employees working in private properties should take responsibility for their own safety and health, and that of others. They should therefore go home if they have mild flu-like symptoms like a runny nose, cough, sore throat or fever. Exceptions can again be made for employees who work in a crucial sector or are involved with a critical process if their symptoms are mild.

3.7 When should employees be sent home?

Employees who have flu-like symptoms, a fever, or who are not complying with the safety measures and precautions should be sent home. Exceptions can again be made for employees who work in a crucial sector or are involved with a critical process if their symptoms are mild.

3.8 Are people allowed to work from home?

People are expected to work from home if they can. However, this isn't appropriate for every job. It's important that employees working from home can do so under healthy conditions, for example a good desk posture. Employers should make sure employees are aware of this. Working from home is not possible in all jobs. This 'Working Together Safely' protocol provides guidelines for when working from home isn't possible. You can find the '[working from home during the corona period](#)' visual by Vakmedianet and TNO on the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk website, which provides tips for working from home under healthy conditions.

¹⁰ Critical processes and crucial roles: please refer to the information issued by the National Government <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/veelgestelde-vragen-over-coronavirus-en-kinderopvang/cruciale-beroepen> and VNO-NCW <https://www.vno-ncw.nl/weekbulletin/extra-info-lijst-cruciale-beroepen-voor-noodopvang-kinderen>

4 Measures in place in the workplace and while working

4.1 Which measures apply to work locations?

You can generally continue working. That's because there is a reduced risk of infection at building sites in the open air. The protocol can be used to manage that risk at other locations. The following guidelines do need to be observed, so discuss these together before starting work:

1. Appoint a corona-responsible person at the work location.
2. a) Keep 1.5 meters away from others at the construction site whenever possible.
b) Adjust the work and work space accordingly. For instance, split groups up during the lunch break. Eat lunch outside whenever possible. Do you have your lunch in your van? Then make sure you do this on your own.
c) Insist on strict observance of the RIVM's hygiene guidelines if working at less than 1.5 metres is unavoidable and try to minimise this as much as possible.
3. The hygiene requirements for the workplace must be complied with:
 - extra cleaning of toilets;
 - thoroughly cleaning door handles;
 - clean any shared materials with water and a good degreasing cleaning agent, or with moist cleaning wipes.
4. Restrict external contacts as much as possible. Make arrangements to this effect with suppliers and subcontractors. This could include supply deliveries outside of the construction site.
5. Where possible, employees should work in fixed teams and at the same locations, so that they don't keep coming into contact with different people.
6. (Strictly) hold each other to account in case of (dangerous) deviant behaviour and correct each other. Everyone must take responsibility for themselves and their colleagues. Employees can ask questions and report problems to their managers.
7. In case of doubt or major unrest, involve the [Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk](#) or the social partners' knowledge centres ([Vollandis](#), [ArboTechniek](#)).

4.2 What measures apply when working in private properties?

Employers are responsible for ensuring their employees can work in a safe environment, which also applies to working in private properties.

4.2.1 Beforehand

- Ask customers:
 - o whether they consent to the work being carried out;
 - o whether they or anyone they live with have any coronavirus symptoms;
 - o whether they or anyone they live with form part of the group of 'vulnerable people', to avoid possible unintended infection by employees;
 - o to make sure their home is well ventilated;
 - o to make the equipment easily accessible.
 - o to keep the toilets clean;
 - o to clean handles, door handles etc. several times a day.
- Tell employees that they are free to leave the work location if they encounter situations in which they feel unsafe. For example, if a customer opens the door whilst coughing and sneezing. The employee should inform the customer that he/she doesn't think it's advisable to enter given the risk of infection and subsequently inform his/her manager or planner too.
- Make sure the customers/residents know that they are completely free to ask the employee to leave the work location if they feel they are confronted with a situation they don't feel

safe in at any time. For example, if the employee coughs or sneezes either before or during the activities. The customer/resident should inform the employee that he/she doesn't think it's advisable for the work to be carried out given the risk of infection. The employee will subsequently also inform his/her manager or planner.

4.2.2 Execution

If a customer or someone they live with has symptoms which could indicate a coronavirus infection (cough, cold, fever), work should only be carried out in the event of a serious fault or emergency. In such cases, extra precautions must be taken. Please refer to paragraph 2.1.4 for details.

Customers who form part of the group of 'vulnerable people' must provide their explicit consent before the activities can commence.

4.2.3 Completion of activities

Where possible, an alternative should be found to clients signing off on work, because of possible infection via hand/mouth/nose/eye contact. Alternatives are available (please refer to the [frequently asked questions](#) on the Corona Construction & Technology Help Desk website).

4.3 How should work be carried out if keeping a distance of 1.5 metres is not possible?

The starting point should always be to avoid this whenever possible. If observing a distance of 1.5 metres really is impossible, be extra vigilant and make arrangements so that the work can still be done while complying with the RIVM hygiene guidelines.

4.4 Communication activities in the workplace

Plan a toolbox meeting (possibly online) during which you can tell employees which precautionary measures have been taken to work as safely as possible and discuss the policy with them.

4.5 Can employees still travel together in a company van?

Yes, all available seats in the company van can be used again with effect from 1st July 2020. The conditions listed in paragraph 2.4 will apply.