

Property Technical Guidance Note

Management of Property – Partial Closure

Introduction

The guidance in this document has been amended from our normal advice on managing unoccupied premises to take into account the challenges presented by the Government's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. If your premises are to be permanently or temporarily closed then reference should be made to MS Amlin's guides on vacant and temporary closed premises.

If, due to the Government's response to the Coronavirus pandemic, you have to partially close or reduce your business operations for a significant length of time then it is important buildings and associated assets are secured and protected to avoid unnecessary losses either through fire, flood, theft or other related peril.

In all instances, where changes are made to the occupancy of premises then MS Amlin must be notified of the change and this may result in additional measures being recommended (depending on specific circumstances) by us.

The impact of partially closing operations against the risk of fire, flood, theft or increased health and safety exposures should be full risk assessed by a competent individual such that appropriate controls can be put in place.

If you have unoccupied premises as a result of changes to working practices please refer to our guide on temporary closed premises for suitable advice on protecting those buildings.

The latest UK Government advice can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

HSE best practice in dealing with the health and safety aspects of coronavirus can be found at: https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=homeworking&utm_content=bulletin-19-mar-20, And lone working at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm>

Latest advice from the NHS can be found at: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

General Safety Considerations

When assessing the partial closure of operations due consideration initially needs to be given to whether, for the remaining activities, you:

- Are you allowed to remain partially open or is your business activity on the UK Government list of restricted businesses? If it is then please refer to our guide on temporary closed premises for guidance on measures to take to secure your premises.
- Adhere to the latest UK Government guidance on social distancing and whether in doing so you create increased risks for your employees or third parties. If so how will these be managed?
- Are able to provide adequate sanitizing and washing facilities such that employees and third parties can maintain necessary hygiene standards?
- Have provisions and procedures in place to deal with deep cleaning of the premises in the event of an employee or third party contracting or potentially bringing Covid-19 in to the premises.
- Depending upon the specific nature of your business operations there may be further risks to assess and controls required due to the Government's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. These should be risk assessed by a competent individual and appropriate

measures put in place.

- Assessments relating to risks impacted or potentially impacted by business operational changes such as fire safety, lone working and emergency procedures should be reviewed and revised by a competent individual to reflect the actual situation in the business. All new or revised controls must be appropriately implemented which may include training or provision of different PPE; this should all be recorded.

Housekeeping

General waste bins should be emptied before closure and relocated to a secure area or compound ideally at least 10m from the building. If this is not possible then the waste bins must have locked lids and where possible secured to prevent unauthorised movement.

All waste produced as a result of the business undertakings must be managed in the normal way e.g. combustible materials cleared at the end of the shift etc.

Security

General

Update your list of key holders to ensure that you have sufficient key holders that are physically able to respond to an alarm activation within 20 minutes.

All door keys to the property should be accounted for - if any key is missing the locks should be changed immediately.

Access controls must be reviewed to ensure normal standards of security and access to the premises can be maintained.

If the business moves to restricted opening hours then the security provisions should be re-assessed and if required additional measures put in place for extended hours of non-occupation. Please contact MS Amlin if further advice is required.

Physical Security

All security devices for preventing access to premises are to remain in full and effective operation at all times when unoccupied.

Perimeter fence security should be maintained and any damage found following routine inspection should be repaired as a matter of urgency.

Electronic Security

All fire and intruder alarm systems must remain in full working order. The intruder alarm system must be set before closure of the premises in the normal manner and routine maintenance and testing of both fire and intruder alarm systems must continue as normal, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where fire and intruder alarm systems benefit from off-site remote signaling to an approved Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) then the remote monitoring must continue during the partial closure.

Where there is no existing permanent intruder alarm system installed, for example sites which are otherwise occupied 24 hours per day, such as hotels, then please notify MS Amlin so that alternative measures can be agreed which may include the installation of an accredited Temporary Alarm System (TAS).

Where remotely monitored CCTV systems are installed, the systems and monitoring must continue to operate as normal.

For large or vulnerable sites which are currently unprotected, the installation of a temporary CCTV system may be deemed appropriate.

In respect of remotely monitored intruder alarm systems issued with a police URN, if police response is downgraded from Level 1 to Level 3 (withdrawn) due to excessive false alarm activations (3 or more false calls in a 12 month rolling period), you must notify MS Amlin and ensure either an NSI, SSAIB or SIA accredited professional key holding service provider is appointed in lieu of police response.

Police response times to intruder alarm activations may also be severely impacted if there is an increase in demand to maintain social order.

Operational Risks

Process and operational risks must be re-assessed in light of the intended partial closure to ensure the reduction in employees doesn't give rise to additional risks outside of normal operations. Particular focus should be given to normally unattended processes to ensure they can be adequately controlled with available employees. If this is considered not possible then these processes should be stopped or additional measures put in place. Please contact MS Amlin if further advice or guidance is required.

All normal maintenance should continue so far as is reasonably practical and if necessary safety critical work and that for fire protection should be prioritised.

Hot Work

Where possible hot work should not be carried out unless all normal controls can be suitably applied including a 60 minute minimum fire watch. However, please consider the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the operational capability of the Fire Service and that their ability to respond could be compromised.

Contractor Management

Review existing controls to ensure they can still be applied under these conditions of partial closure, if not then either stop the work or implement additional controls. These should be assessed by a competent individual and recorded. Particular attention should be given to access control to premises, lone working, reinstatement of security provisions when leaving the premises and hot work activities.

Fixed Fire Protection

The integrity of the fire main, sprinkler installation, and automatic fire alarm is to be preserved. This must also include the upkeep of weekly testing and inspection arrangements and the continuation of maintenance contracts so far as is reasonably practical where Government restrictions allow.

All fire doors should be closed prior to closing the premises.

The fire brigade should be advised if the premises are unoccupied for extended periods.

Fire Service response times and ability to respond could be compromised as the Coronavirus pandemic continues therefore fire safety measures should be reviewed in light of this.

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