

## **COVID-19 Exit Strategy for Chimney Sweeps**

This is intended to be used as a guide only. As with all our work, each job presents its own risks which need to be evaluated at the time and appropriate control measures put in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

If the customer admits to being symptomatic or is in a vulnerable group, we recommend that the work is postponed for at least 14 days, in line with Government guidelines.

### **Timing**

As it lifts restrictions, the government will reopen schools and allow children to resume their education. We see this as the time when it will be reasonable for us to return to work, albeit with additional procedures in place to reduce the viral transmission of the virus through cross contamination between the houses that we visit. Please refer to the RAMS attached which should be used in conjunction with the occupational RAMS and adjusted to suit each individual job. The RAMS are generic and primarily designed to highlight any issues concerning viral transmission and what measures can be put in place. They are not specific to any one job, location or set of circumstances. A dynamic risk assessment should always be done before and during any work undertaken.

### **Transmission**

The primary source of transmission is likely to be by us or our equipment touching contaminated surfaces. Many of these we can avoid touching by getting the customer to do some of the preparation for us. These are listed in the RAMS attached.

The secondary source of transmission could be through breathing contaminated air. Provided we practise adequate social distancing, this should not be an issue, but we recommend that RPE is worn throughout the whole process.

### **RPE**

We have spoken to RPE manufacturers and companies who deal with working in infected spaces. Most RPE protects from the inhalation of substances but has no filter on the exhalation. Most merely direct this away from the eyes to prevent the steaming up of eye protection. There is a risk that we could exhale the virus if we are asymptomatic. If it is thought to be necessary, a second mask could be worn, that has no exhale valve, underneath the normal RPE. This could further reduce the risk of others being exposed to the virus.

### **PPE**

All normal PPE should be worn, but should be changed or disinfected after each job. Disposable items should be left in a plastic bag until the end of the day and then double bagged, sealed in the bags and left for 72 hours in the open air before being disposed of in normal domestic waste.

In the current circumstances, barrier creams are not considered adequate protection and

long sleeves and work trousers should be worn. Eye protection can be used if it is considered necessary.

### **Contaminated surfaces**

We recommend that the hearth and the appliance are disinfected prior to work starting and once work is complete. This will remove one of the main risks of transmission. Suitable disinfectants are normally no more than 70% alcohol and should be allowed to sit on the contaminated surface for at least 30 seconds before being wiped off. One such product is Ultra AX sanitiser although similar products are suitable.

<https://www.chemicalproducts.net/shop/catering/ultra-ax-sanitiser-kills-coronavirus-hiv-influenza-more>

### **Floor Sheets**

Disposable plastic or single use cloth sheets should be used as floor sheets and runners. These should be double bagged for disposal or prior to being laundered. Alternatively, plastic backed floor sheets could be used and the floor side disinfected between jobs.

### **Payments and certificates**

We recommend electronic payments only, either using debit or credit card or bank transfer. Card machines should be disinfected after each use. Certificates should not be signed by the customer and should be sent electronically or later by post.

### **General**

Maintain social distancing by asking the customer to open doors for you and leave the work area while you're working. Wash or sanitise your hands between each job. Disinfect your equipment between jobs as much as is practical.

Special Precautions for COVID-19			19th April 2020
Operation	Risk/Criteria	Action	Person responsible
<p><b>Prior to arrival, warn customer of special precautions that must be adhered to for reduction of cross contamination risk.</b></p> <p><b>Before sweep's arrival, customer to arrange the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Clear access route to the appliance.</b></li> <li><b>2. Remove coffee tables, fenders, etc. from the area around the appliance.</b></li> <li><b>3. Remove all ornaments, tools, fuel containers, etc. from the hearth.</b></li> <li><b>4. Make an electrical outlet easily available.</b></li> <li><b>5. Maintain social distancing throughout, preferably leave the room.</b></li> <li><b>6. Keep a phone nearby for contact with the sweep.</b></li> <li><b>7. Have a credit/debit card available for payment.</b></li> </ol>	<p>Customer or operative are symptomatic.</p> <p>Precautions can not be met.</p>	<p>Postpone work</p>	<p>Operative Supervisor Customer</p>
<p><b>On arrival, phone customer to inform them and ask for doors to the property to be opened.</b></p>	<p>Transmission to doors and door handles.</p>	<p>Ensure doors are open.</p>	<p>Customer.</p>

Special Precautions for COVID-19			19th April 2020
Operation	Risk/Criteria	Action	Person responsible
<p><b>Put on disposable gloves and RPE.</b></p> <p><b>Note: RPE only protects the wearer. Exhaled air is not filtered and could result in an asymptomatic operative transmitting the virus.</b></p> <p><b>Note: Further PPE may be deemed necessary by the operative following a dynamic risk assessment; eg disposable coveralls, eye protection.</b></p>	Transmission from equipment.	Wear PPE and RPE.	Operative.
<p><b>Enter property, locate appliance and place plastic/plastic backed floor sheets on the floor as required. Plastic/plastic backed floor runners or disposable overshoes optional to suit conditions.</b></p>	Transmission to floor sheets.	Sheet management.	Operative.
<p><b>Disinfect appliance and hearth.</b></p>	Transmission from customer.	Spray disinfectant on to surfaces.	Operative.
<p><b>Complete job as normal.</b></p> <p><b>Note: It is more important than ever to keep a tidy work area with all tools replaced to tool boxes/ caddies immediately after use.</b></p>	Separate RAMS		
<p><b>Carry equipment back to van and clean/disinfect before storing.</b></p>	Airborne transmission possible.	Spray disinfectant over equipment.	Operative.

Special Precautions for COVID-19			19th April 2020
Operation	Risk/Criteria	Action	Person responsible
Carefully remove floor sheets and runners from property.	Transmission from property to van.	Spray disinfectant over floor side of sheets or dispose of sheets into a sealed container.	Operative.
Phone customer to inform them that work is complete and to meet at door for payment.			
Payment by card only. Certificate by email/post.	Transmission from customer and operative.	Social distancing. Disinfect card machine.	Operative. Customer.
Return to van and remove gloves.	Transmission to operative.	Ensure exterior of gloves is not touched. Dispose of gloves into a sealed container. Wash hands/apply disinfectant.	Operative.
Remove RPE and store.	Transmission to operative.	Disinfect RPE and store as normal.	Operative.

### Notes

1. All PPE is designed to protect the wearer and no one else. RPE presents a problem in this respect. Most RPE has no filter on the exhaled air and if the wearer is asymptomatic, infected air is highly likely to exit the mask. This will happen no matter how good a fit or what level of filtration there is on the inhale side of the device. There are disposable masks available that have a deflector on the exhale valve, and also those with no exhale valve, which could be more appropriate to use in these circumstances, provided they are frequently changed and disposed of correctly.
2. A good quality, alcohol based disinfectant is recommended. This should be sprayed onto the surface until the surface is 'wet' and reasonably covered. It should be left for a minimum of 30 seconds to ensure it has killed any bacteria or virus, and then wiped off with a clean, dry cloth. The cloth should be disposed of correctly.
3. Disposal of any items used during the work should be done to minimise any transmission of infection. All waste should be double bagged, the tops of the bags secured and then left outside for a minimum of 72 hours. At this point, they will be safe to dispose of in the general domestic waste.
4. At the end of the working day, ensure that the driver's seat, steering wheel, etc. of the van are disinfected. All workwear is removed and stored in a sealed container prior to being laundered. It is recommended that a shower is taken as soon as is practical on completion of the day's work.