



Issue No. 58/2020 | 9th April 2020

TO ALL CWU MEMBERS IN OPENREACH CIVILS

Dear Colleague

**Chief Engineers Civils and Covid 19**

**Since the outbreak of Covid 19 the CWU has been doing all it can, both nationally and locally, to ensure that you are kept as safe as possible during this public health emergency.  Yesterday (Wednesday) a bulletin outlining the current situation across Openreach was emailed to members across the company – but we’ve now taken the decision to produce a specific communication for our Civils members, as we are aware of the unique challenges you face within your role.**

**Social Distancing and Hygiene Rules**

Social distancing, in line with Government, Public Health England and the HSE guidelines, is not optional. In addition, the Welsh Government has now set out additional definitions relating to how this should be applied in the workplace, these include;

* Minimising the level of interaction
* Physical barriers
* Improved hygiene and reminders about the importance of hygiene.
* Washing hands well for 20 seconds with soap after close contact.
* Ensuring those with symptoms are not present on the premises.

Always remembering to take into account if at any point you feel at risk because you cannot follow social distancing and hygiene rules, **you must:**

* **Immediately stop work**
* **Make the site safe**
* **Inform your manager**

**The CWU will always support you in putting your safety first and will not tolerate pressure being placed on any member to continue working in unsafe circumstances. If the appropriate hygiene materials are not available do not proceed.**

The CWU raised concerns with Openreach that many of the daily tasks undertaken by Civils members could mean that you have to come closer than the 2 metres advised. As aresult, for example, if you are excavating an area you must use the *‘Step in Step out’* rule.

The union has been assured that mechanical aids will be provided as and when needed, theoretically reducing the number of two person lifts. Loading and unloading of plant on and off vehicles should be done using a winch where available – and, if this is not available, then other arrangements should be made locally. Also, the breaking down of heavier loads that can be broken down should be considered to prevent the need to come closer than 2 metres**. With all of the above you should always be following the hygiene requirements**.

If you have to share tools or handle tools that other have used you make sure you have sufficient supplies of cleaning agents to maintain a safe, clean and sanitised environment when working, driving and operating plant and/or machinery. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available. Minimise the need to rotate plant operators to minimise dual use and handling of controls.

**If at any point you feel at risk because you cannot follow social distancing and hygiene rules, you must:**



* **Immediately stop work**
* **Make the site safe**
* **Inform your manager**

**Vehicle Sharing**

The CWU and Openreach have agreed that under no circumstances should vehicles be shared, even for lunch breaks. The process if someone goes off with suspected Covid 19 means the vehicle must be parked at its usual safe place of parking, the keys should remain with the driver and the vehicle should not be allocated to any other driver. The vehicle should not be entered for a period of 96 hours. **Do NOT use another vehicle unless you are certain the previous engineer is not off due to COVID-19.**

# **Contact the CWU**

The Union remains here to keep you safe and assist you through this difficult time. If you have any concerns or need assistance please contact your local rep or Branch. If you don’t know which Branch you are in you can find out via [www.cwu.org/contact-us](http://www.cwu.org/contact-us).

**We are here to help. Keep Safe**

**From Davie Bowman**
Assistant Secretary