

Members’ Briefing

30 March 2020

**Advice for employees interacting with members of public and/or protesters during coronavirus restrictions.**

**Background**

Employees of member companies may be required to continue working during the current Government restrictions related to the coronavirus outbreak, if their sites are providing critical/essential products or services.

During this period there is a risk that employees either travelling to work or involved in work activities off-site (such as delivering materials) may encounter members of the public or protesters objecting to their activities. There is also an increasing potential for individuals to be challenged by the police. This briefing provides advice on how member companies and their employees can handle these encounters in a safe and courteous manner.

**Providing documentation for employees**

Employers should provide each active employee with written documentation detailing why they are still working, referencing the current Government advice that is in place. This can be produced if the employee is stopped by the police or shown to members of the public/protesters who may object to ongoing commercial activities. Suggested content could include:

* Critical Worker Status; The bearer of this letter is an employee of (Member company). (Member company) is an essential materials supplier to the XXXXX industry, a vital part of the UK infrastructure/economy.
* (Member company) has taken all required steps to ensure wherever possible, employees refrain from unnecessary journeys and carry out their employment from home. As responsible employers we apply all UK Government advice and are reviewing our approach on a daily basis.
* Acting on the advice of the UK Government and in particular the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) advice, (Member company) continues to operate and support the supply chain of the UK XXXX industry and various requirements of the UK critical infrastructure.
* In compliance with UK Government requirements, the letter holder’s journey is a vital aspect of this continuous effort and directly relevant to their employment with (Member company). Their role cannot otherwise be undertaken from home.
* We hope this letter provides sufficient information for your purposes. However, should you wish to check the employment status of this individual, the following individuals may be contacted: ……………………………….

**Dealing with the public**

Employees should be briefed to ensure that they do not provide the public with photo opportunities or sound bites with negative propaganda potential. Everyone with a mobile phone is a potential cameraman/woman, who will be tweeting/blogging to a potential online audience of thousands or millions. To this end, when dealing with the public all staff should be reminded:

* Always be polite and respectful
* Never be drawn or provoked into confrontational situations
* Never become involved in situations that would put health, safety or lives at risk
* Adopt a slow, deliberate, calm but firm approach to all eventualities
* Display the highest standards of behaviour when dealing with the public
* Maintain 2m separation between individuals at all times in accordance with Government advice to minimise risk of transmitting the coronavirus infection

In the event of local protest activity, company staff on site should avoid any public comment, either to protestors or to third parties (journalists) who may be accompanying them.

In the unlikely event of challenge or protest activity, MPA members are encouraged to share relevant information with [security@mineralproducts.org](mailto:security@mineralproducts.org) to facilitate engagement and coordination with the national police service and other member companies.

Further information relating to dealing with protests is available in the [MPA Members Briefing: Protester Advice](https://www.safequarry.com/resources/MPA%20Briefing%20Protestor%20Advice%20v2.pdf).

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