

A photograph of a car rental counter area, overlaid with a blue tint. The counter is white with a yellow stripe, and there are signs on the counter, including one that says "Please Stand Behind the RED LINE".

The BVRLA Guide to

A photograph of a car rental car, overlaid with a blue tint. The car is white and has a yellow stripe. The text "VIA RENT" is visible on the side of the car.

# Operating during the Covid-19 Pandemic

A photograph of a woman wearing a white face mask and a dark jacket, overlaid with a blue tint. She is looking towards the camera.

**British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association**



## **BVRLA Guide to Operating during the Covid-19 pandemic – July 2021**

### **Table of Contents**

Introduction.....	2
Disclaimer .....	2
Stay informed .....	2
Government advice.....	3
Working safely during Covid-19 .....	3
Testing staff for COVID-19 .....	3
NHS test and trace: workplace guidance .....	3
Travelling to work .....	4
Travel to Work .....	4
Working in an office (non-customer facing) .....	4
Rental branch operational advice .....	7
Working in a rental branch (customer facing).....	7
Providing staff with protective equipment .....	8
Renting to customers.....	9
Vehicle Cleaning.....	10
Delivery and Collection of Vehicles.....	12
Delivery and collection process.....	12
Useful Links.....	13



## Introduction

The aim of this guide is to provide support and guidance to BVRLA members on the running of their operations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The safety of staff and customers is of the utmost importance during these unprecedented times and by using initiative and taking a best practice approach to their operations, members can manage the risks to those who are continuing to work and customers who need vehicles.

This document will be updated as new guidance emerges.

If you would have any questions about this guidance or would like to provide feedback, please contact the BVRLA at [legal@bvrla.co.uk](mailto:legal@bvrla.co.uk).

The BVRLA would like to thank members for their support in producing this guidance including the provision of images.

## Disclaimer

The purpose of the document is to provide guidance and information only. Members should implement suggestions from this guidance only after taking the appropriate professional advice and in adherence with the relevant rules and regulations as applicable to their circumstances. Members should refer to the latest government-issued guidance [here](#) to ensure that they are receiving the most up to date information at all times. “

## Stay informed

[BVRLA Covid-19 Business Guidance](#)

[Government Covid-19 Advice](#)

[FCA Covid-19 Guidance for Firms](#)

[Government Coronavirus WhatsApp Information Service](#) – Add 07860 064422 in your phone contacts and message the word ‘hi’ in a WhatsApp message to get started.

The Government has launched a dedicated Covid-19 **Business Support Helpline** for businesses to speak directly to an advisor. The number to call is 0300 456 3565.

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## Government advice

The Government has removed outstanding legal restrictions on social contact, life events, and opened the remaining closed settings. The Government is instead enabling people to make informed decisions about how to manage the risk to themselves and others. The Government has provided guidance to the public and to businesses on how they can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the risk of a resurgence which puts the NHS under unsustainable pressure.

[Full guidance on what this means has been published on the Gov.UK website.](#)

## Working safely during Covid-19

The government, in consultation with industry, has produced guidance to help ensure workplaces are as safe as possible. [There are guides which cover a range of different types of work.](#) It is important to note that many businesses operate over more than one type of workplace and may need to use more than one of these guides to keep staff and customers safe.

From Step 4, legal restrictions can be lifted, all businesses can open and the government is no longer instructing people to work from home.

To support businesses through this next phase, the 'Working Safely' guidance will continue to provide advice on sensible precautions employers can take to manage risk and support their staff and customers.

Businesses still have a legal duty to manage risks to those affected by their business. The way to do this is to carry out a health and safety risk assessment, including the risk of COVID-19, and to take reasonable steps to mitigate the risks you identify.

You should use the guidance to consider the risk within your premises and decide which mitigations are appropriate to adopt.

In the long term, Government expect that businesses will need to take fewer precautions to manage the risk of COVID-19. They will continue to keep the guidance under review and will remove advice once it's safe to do so.

## Testing staff for COVID-19

Testing for COVID-19 is available for anyone in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland who has symptoms of coronavirus, you can ask for a test through the NHS website. Testing is most effective within 3 days of symptoms developing. Further information is available on the [Government website.](#)

## NHS test and trace: workplace guidance

The NHS test and trace service:

- provides testing for anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus to find out if they have the virus
- gets in touch with anyone who has had a positive test result to help them share information about any close recent contacts they have had
- alerts those contacts, where necessary, and notifies them they need to self-isolate to help stop the spread of the virus



To facilitate the NHS test and trace service, government is asking employers to encourage workers to heed any notifications to self-isolate and provide support to these individuals when in isolation.

Further information is available on the [NHS website](#).

## Travelling to work

### Key points to consider:

- Staff may wish to travel to work alone using their own transport e
- Providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available
- Changing and staggering office hours to reduce congestion on public transport

## Travel to Work

Staff may wish to travel to branches/offices alone using their own transport. If staff have no option but to share transport:

- Journeys could be shared with the same individuals and with the minimum number of people at any one time
- Good ventilation (i.e. keeping the windows open) and facing away from each other helps to reduce the risk of transmission
- Vehicles could be cleaned regularly using gloves and standard cleaning products, with emphasis on handles and other areas where passengers may touch surfaces
- Passengers on public transport or using shared transport may wish to wear a face covering

Companies should consider:

- Parking arrangements for additional vehicles and bicycles
- Other means of transport to avoid public transport e.g. cycling
- Providing hand cleaning facilities at entrances and exits. This should be soap and water wherever possible or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available
- How someone taken ill would get home

Where public transport is the only option for staff, you may wish to consider:

- Changing and staggering office hours to reduce congestion on public transport
- Avoid using public transport during peak times (05:45 – 7:30 and 16:00 – 17:30)
- Remind staff that face coverings can be worn on public transport

## Working in an office (non-customer facing)

The following are key points to consider for your office environment:

### Workplace access

- Reduce the number of non-essential visitors
- Introduce staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact
- Remove or disable entry systems that require skin contact e.g. fingerprint scanners
- Promote good hygiene, encourage staff to wash or clean hands before entering or leaving premises. Provide the necessary facilities to do this, warm water and soap or hand sanitiser



- Regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, delivery areas etc.

## **Enhanced cleaning in the workplace**

- Enhanced and regular cleaning across all areas of the workplace using approved cleaning products and including all building touch-points
- Enhanced and regular cleaning of escalators
- Taps and washing facilities
- Toilet flush and seats
- Door handles and push plates
- Handrails on staircases and corridors
- Lift and hoist controls
- Machinery and equipment controls
- Food preparation and eating surfaces
- Telephone equipment
- Keyboards, photocopiers and other office equipment
- Rubbish collection and storage points should be increased and emptied regularly throughout and at the end of each day.

## **Canteens, cafes and eating areas**

- Dedicated eating areas should be identified
- Break times should be staggered to reduce congestion
- Hand cleaning facilities or hand sanitiser should be available at the entrance of any room where people eat and should be used by staff when entering and leaving
- Keep equipment (e.g. kettles, microwaves, etc) clean between use
- Ask workforce to bring pre-prepared meals and refillable drinking bottles from home
- Where catering is provided, it should be pre-prepared and wrapped food only
- Shared crockery, eating utensils, cups (unless from dispenser) etc. should not be used
- Payments should be taken by contactless card wherever possible
- Drinking water should be provided with enhanced cleaning measures of the tap mechanism introduced
- Tables should be cleaned between each use
- All rubbish should be put straight in the bin and not left for someone else to clear up
- All areas used for eating must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each break and shift, including chairs, door handles, vending machines and payment devices

## **Toilet Facilities**

- Restrict the number of people using toilet facilities at any one time
- Promote washing hands before and after using the facilities
- Enhance the cleaning regimes for toilet facilities particularly door handles, locks and the toilet flush
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal.



## Hand washing facilities

- Ensure soap and fresh water is readily available
- Provide hand sanitiser where hand washing facilities are unavailable
- Regularly clean the hand washing facilities and check soap and sanitiser levels
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins for hand towels with regular removal and disposal
- Organisations will need extra supplies of soap, hand sanitiser and paper towels and these should be securely stored.

## Changing facilities, showers and drying rooms

- Use staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion
- Enhanced cleaning of all facilities throughout the day and at the end of each day
- Based on the size of each facility, determine how many people can use it at any one time
- Provide suitable and sufficient rubbish bins in these areas with regular removal and disposal.

## Other measures

- Ensure ventilation is fit for purpose in the workplace and allow adequate ventilation
- Regularly clean the inside of vehicle cabs and between uses by different operators
- Visitors to sites should be curtailed unless essential and business critical such as delivery drivers, outside maintenance or repairs
- Meetings performed via video link/ skype/ conference call where possible
- Encourage 'side-to-side' or 'back-to-back' workspaces rather than 'face-to-face'.

## PPE Procedures

There are 2 grades of personal protective equipment, FFP grade 2 is used by NHS staff and is not appropriate for use by staff in the rental and leasing industry. FFP grade 1 or unclassified personal protective equipment are paper or reusable cotton masks and are readily available. If reusable cotton masks are used you will need to consider advising staff:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it
- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- continue to wash your hands regularly
- change and wash your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- practise social distancing wherever possible

## RIDDOR advice updated to include Covid-19

RIDDOR, (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013), has been updated to include new advice of the reporting of COVID-19. This follows a joint statement from the HSE, CBI and TUC saying that businesses staying open during the coronavirus must guarantee safe working conditions including social distancing.



You must only make a report under RIDDOR when:

- an unintended incident at work has led to someone's possible or actual exposure to coronavirus. This must be reported as a **dangerous occurrence**.
- a worker has been diagnosed as having COVID 19 and there is reasonable evidence that it was caused by exposure at work. This must be reported as a **case of disease**.
- a worker dies as a result of occupational exposure to coronavirus.

Read more on RIDDOR reporting of Covid-19 on the [Health & Safety Executive website](#).

## Rental branch operational advice

### Key points to consider:

- Demarcate customer queue locations with hazard warning tape at 2m/1m intervals
- How parking spaces are used to encourage social distancing
- Clear signage at point of entry detailing operating rules & procedures
- Additional cleaning
- Do staff need to wear face coverings in branches

### Working in a rental branch (customer facing)

The following advice should be issued to all staff in branch:

- Where possible, keep some distance away from other people. Where the working conditions do not allow for this, staff may wish to use mitigations, such as face coverings and hand sanitiser, to reduce the risk of transmission. If necessary, use flexible working hours and split shift teams to minimise the risk of people gathering. This may also mean repositioning desks and / or where staff sit during breaks
- Operate a "one phone / terminal / card machine" to a person policy
- Wipe down desks, counters, telephones, desk stationery, e-signature pads, tablets and credit card readers regularly with disinfectant wipes. Bin the wipes in branch waste refuse sack before tying it shut
- Wash your hands with soap & warm water for 20 seconds as regularly as possible
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Vending machines regularly sanitised
- Toilet and bathroom facilities are cleaned and sanitised each day.

For your branch operations the following should be considered:

- You should calculate the maximum number of customers that can reasonably be in the branch at any one time. This should take into account total floorspace as well as any pinch point areas.
- Do face masks need to be used by staff or by staff and customers
- Use flexible working hours and split shift teams to minimise the risk of people gathering
- Ask customers to remove face coverings, if worn, temporarily in order that their ID can be verified.

# Regulation & Compliance



- Use either every other counter terminal or just one –
- Limit the number of customers allowed in branch based on the size of branch and allowing for customers and staff to be 1m apart where possible
- Demarcate customer queue locations with hazard warning tape at 2m/1m intervals where possible
- Consider how parking spaces are used so customers are apart where possible
- Implement a one-way system that will prevent people passing each other
- Clear signage at point of entry detailing new operating rules & procedures including:
  - Directional signage to sanitiser
  - Face coverings
  - Where to stand whilst waiting to collect vehicles



- Perspex screens at counters, see examples below:



## Providing staff with protective equipment

There are 2 grades of personal protective equipment, FFP grade 2 is used by NHS staff and is not appropriate for use by staff in the rental and leasing industry. FFP grade 1 or unclassified personal protective equipment are paper or reusable cotton masks and are readily available. If reusable cotton masks are used you will need to consider advising staff:

- wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it

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- when wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands
- change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it
- continue to wash your hands regularly
- change and wash your face covering daily
- if the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste
- practise social distancing wherever possible

## Renting to customers

You should ask customers about any symptoms of COVID-19 they or the people they live may have – do this prior to renting and at the return of the vehicle. If the customer has symptoms, they are putting your staff at risk and you may decide not to rent a vehicle to them.

Customers may need to wear face coverings in your branches and you may wish to consider providing them at the entrance.

[The Foreign & Commonwealth Office \(FCO\) has the latest guidance about travelling abroad.](#)

Further advice from the FCO states that no travel is risk-free, and disruption is still possible. If you plan to travel:

- read the [coronavirus travel guidance](#) to make sure you are prepared for your travel
- read the [Travel Advice](#) for your destination, for information on local coronavirus measures that you will need to follow
- sign up for email alerts for Travel Advice to ensure you are informed of any changes while you are travelling

If a vehicle is being taken abroad a [vehicle on hire certificate \(VE103b\)](#) should be issued in place of providing the vehicle registration document

In addition, if a customer returns a vehicle and advises that they or someone they live with has displayed symptoms of COVID-19, you will need to ensure your staff are protected and that additional cleaning measures are undertaken, as outlined below.

The key symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal



## Vehicle Cleaning

### Key points to consider:

- Disposable cleaning equipment and personal protective equipment
- Where possible, keep staff two metres apart
- Handwashing between each vehicle cleaning
- Use a different processes where a vehicle is returned and the customer advises they or someone they live with has COV-19 symptoms

### Areas to give special attention to:

- Handles (internal & external)
- Steering wheel (the whole of the wheel should be cleaned including those out-of-sight areas where fingers tend to grip)
- Full length of the indicator & windscreen wiper stalks
- Gear stick
- Seat belts, seat belt adjusters & buckles
- Seat adjusters - height/backwards/forwards
- Rear view mirror
- Dashboard & infotainment controls
- Glove box
- Keys including the handle, metal and the ignition itself
- Start button (if applicable)
- Heating/cooling controls
- Air vent grips

### Vehicles being returned/prepared

All vehicles should be subject to additional cleaning once returned from any customer and before being hired to another. Where possible staff should be provided with disposable gloves for cleaning and after the cleaning has taken place hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hand washing facilities are not available an alcohol-based sanitiser (with at least 60% alcohol) could be used on the hands. If other forms of protective clothing (such as face coverings or aprons) are used these should be removed after each vehicle has been cleaned and disposed of. At a minimum the cleaning should include:

- Using a disposable cloth or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water or a general purpose disinfectant cleaner, then disinfect these surfaces. Pay attention





to frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as steering wheels, handbrake, gearstick and door handles.

- If the vehicle is not being rented again you could consider seat covers, steering wheel covers etc to protect the surfaces which have been cleaned
- Where a cabin air filter is used for cleaning air inside the vehicle consider changing this filter more frequently

## **Vehicles returned where the customer, family member or someone who has been in the vehicle have displayed symptoms of COVID-19**

If a customer advises they or someone they live with has COVID-19 or the symptoms of COVID-19, members should isolate the vehicle (where possible) for 72 hours as the risk of contamination is believed to reduce significantly over time. After this period has passed the following advice may be helpful as to what would constitute a deep clean and what protective equipment should be worn:

- Disposable gloves should be worn (where available) and after the cleaning has taken place hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hand washing facilities are not available an alcohol-based sanitiser (with at least 60% alcohol) could be used on the hands. If other forms of protective clothing (such as disposable face coverings or aprons) are used, these should be double-bagged along with the disposable gloves, then stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished. If storage for at least 72 hours is not possible, arrange for collection as a Category B infectious waste either by your local waste collection authority if they currently collect your waste or otherwise by a specialist clinical waste contractor. They will supply you with orange clinical waste bags for you to place your bags into so the waste can be sent for appropriate treatment.
- Using a disposable cloth or paper roll, to clean all hard surfaces, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water or a general-purpose cleaner, then disinfect these surfaces. Pay attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as steering wheels, handbrake, gearstick and door handles. The disinfectant should be:
  - a combined detergent and disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million of available chlorine
  - or**
  - a household detergent followed by disinfectant at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million of available chlorine. Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants
- Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.



## Delivery and Collection of Vehicles

### Key points to consider:

- Regularly risk assess your process for changes/improvements
- Wash your hands with soap & warm water for 20 seconds before and after each delivery/collection or use hand sanitiser if handwashing is not available.
- If travelling with customers/employees in vehicles, face coverings may be worn

### General Instructions

- If possible, there should be no passengers in the vehicle. However, if more than one person is in the same vehicle, the largest vehicle available should be used and the driver and passengers should sit as far away as possible from each other i.e. one passenger in the front and the other in the back, on opposite sides of the vehicle. Having the windows open will also allow air to circulate throughout the vehicle. Face coverings may be worn
- Wipe down the steering wheel, gear stick, crane controller, access handles and any hand-held devices etc. (if available) with anti-bacterial wipes after each delivery/collection
- Bin the wipes either in a site bin or put in a normal refuse sack (not to be stored in the cab) and place in branch waste bin having tied it shut
- Wash your hands with soap & warm water for 20 seconds before and after each delivery/collection or use hand sanitiser if handwashing is not available
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- If available, the driver could wear single use gloves which are changed after each delivery/collection and disposed of safely, face coverings can be considered
- Contact customers prior to delivery/collection of the vehicle to provide guidance on how a contactless effort will take place.

### Delivery and collection process

Ensure that there has been clear communication with the customer prior to the vehicle being collected or delivered. This should include advising how the driver will conduct themselves in a way that presents no risk and understanding whether the customer or anyone living with the customer has self-isolated because they have coronavirus symptoms. Examples of good practice in this area includes:

- The driver calling the customer rather than approaching the door
- The customer and driver may wish to remain apart and use risk mitigation provisions such as face coverings and hand sanitiser.
- The customer and the delivery agent should hand wash/sanitise
- The collection agent can expect the customer to place the keys and all paperwork in the vehicle (preferably in an envelope) only when they have arrived to make the pick-up. For vehicles being delivered, the delivery agent will leave the keys and all paperwork (preferably in an envelope) in the vehicle with the door open in the presence of the customer



- The keys should be wiped with hand sanitiser/wipes before being picked up by either party
- If the customer is required to sign a hand-held device, collection/delivery report or rental agreement then pens and devices should be sanitised prior to being placed for the customer. The driver should then move two metres away, where possible, to give the customer a chance to sign. The device or pen should be sanitised after signature as well.

## Use of electronic signatures

- It is now well understood that an electronic signature is binding on both parties and has the same standing as a ink and paper signature. [The Law Commission confirms that electronic signatures can be used to execute documents.](#)
- [There is Government guidance available](#) to support the use of electronic signatures as well.

The BVRLA and FLA have produced [best practice guidance](#) for delivery and collection of leased vehicles and the broad principals of it can be adapted for rental as well.

## Useful Links

[Guidance on advice to provide to staff](#) including: how to help prevent spread of COVID-19; what to do if someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a workplace setting; advice to give to individuals who have travelled to specific areas; and advice for the certification of absence from work resulting from COVID19.

ACAS has published [information for employees and employers](#), including information on simple steps to help protect the health and safety of staff, sick pay and absence from work.

Advice from the [Health and Safety Executive](#) on keeping workers safe during the pandemic.

[The SMMT](#) – The SMMT have produced guidance for car showrooms and aftermarket operations.