

## Visits at homes/sites by workers during COVID 19 Pandemic Guidance

The guidance aims to help workers keep themselves safe and reduce risks of infection during home visits and minimise the risk of infection by workers entering homes.

### Minimising visits through technology

The guidance is based on the principle that workers and their organisations will minimise face to face home visits during the pandemic, based on risk assessments.

Workers to make home visits only:

- When risk assessment deems it necessary to prevent significant harm and/or inconvenience.
- When risks of infection to staff and people visited have been mitigated in accordance with this guidance.
- Organisations and practitioners should optimise use of digital technologies and telephone contacts wherever possible to maintain contact, assess and review.

### Home visits: good practice

Whenever you are visiting a household/site, you should treat the situation as a COVID-19 high risk situation (for visitors and/or people visited) and take protective infection-prevention precautions as necessary.

- Contact the person/household to understand as much as possible the problem that needs fixing before going on site to minimise the time spent in the household
- **Contact the household you are visiting to confirm that no member of the household is unwell, or in self-isolation due to exposure to COVID-19 – if a member of the household is unwell, if possible, postpone the visit if possible.**
- Have the home/site owner prepare any items/paperwork required in advance.
- Always maintain the recommended physical distance of 2 metres with members of the household and advise household to kindly also maintain this physical distance when phoning in.
- Ensure that only one person is present in the room/household
- Identify and secure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) if indicated: i.e. hand sanitiser, gloves, masks, protective clothing.

### Immediately before the visit

- Identify the equipment you will need during the visit so that you can easily find this.
- Ensure that you have a way of disposing of any protective equipment
- Ensure that you have a way of washing your hands prior to and immediately after leaving each household, for example using hand sanitiser that is easy to access

- **Prior to entering the premises confirm again that no member of the household is unwell or in self isolation due to exposure to COVID-19 – if a member of the household is unwell, if possible, postpone the visit**

#### **During the visit**

- Ask household members to open any doors or windows for you
- Minimise the surfaces that you touch,
- Do not put your personal items down on any surfaces,
- Ask for the room to be ventilated (e.g. through an open window and door),
- Any equipment that needs to be fixed needs to be wiped with an alcohol wipes or disinfectant, if possible. prior to use
- Avoid touching touch your face,
- Keep 2 metres or more away from other people.
- Try to have not more than one person with you in the same room at any one time.
- Keep the visit focused and as concise as possible

#### **After the visit**

- Sanitise any equipment that you have brought out of the home after every visit, for example by using disinfectant wipes for phones, laptops, tools, equipment etc.
- Remember to sanitise the surfaces where you clean the equipment
- Remove your mask, gloves etc as shown below.
- Dispose of any protective equipment in the appropriate waste recipient
- Wash your hands using hand sanitiser.
- At the end of the day, remove and wash clothes that may have been exposed to the virus, and have a shower, cleaning especially face and hands.

The principle you need to keep in mind is that you should not touch the external surface of the gloves (which may be contaminated) with your bare hands. Follow this technique to safely remove disposable gloves:



**1**  
Pinch one glove at the wrist and peel it away from your hand.



**2**  
Turn the glove inside out and hold it in the hand that is still gloved.



**3**  
Hook 2nd and 3rd fingers of your bare hand inside the other glove. Be Careful! Do not touch the outside of the glove.



**4**  
Pull off the glove, turning it inside out with the first glove inside.



**5**  
Throw the gloves into the bin.



**6**  
Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand rub.

### Personal Protective Equipment

Workers in occupations who have extensive face-to-face contact with the public where there is ongoing transmission could benefit from the use of wearing a surgical mask or equivalent. When disposing of a mask ensure not to touch the outside surface. Handle this only from the straps and with your face facing downwards and discarded immediately.

The use of gloves may not be necessary however if used ensure that use and even more importantly removal is according to the guidance Use of gloves which can be found on the website link [www.covid19health.gov.mt](http://www.covid19health.gov.mt)

Gloves should be disposed of safely immediately after use. Follow guidelines below on how to take off your gloves.

The use of visors is not recommended as a means of prevention from Covid19, since there is no evidence that their use provides additional protection outside of the health care setting. (Centre of Evidence Based Medicine April 2020)

#### References:

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Guidelines for the use of non-pharmaceutical measures to delay and mitigate the impact of 2019-nCoV. April 2020

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). Using face masks in the community - Reducing COVID-19 transmission from potentially asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic people through the use of face masks. Stockholm: ECDC; April 2020. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/using-face-masks-community-reducing-covid-19-transmission>

Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine. What is the efficacy of eye protection equipment compared to no eye protection equipment in preventing transmission of COVID-19-type respiratory illnesses in primary and community care? A Rapid Review, April 3 2020. <https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/what-is-the-efficacy-of-eye-protection-equipment-compared-to-no-eye-protection-equipment-in-preventing-transmission-of-covid-19-type-respiratory-illnesses-in-primary-and-community-care/>