

Back to Work **Resource Pack**

April 2020

Introduction

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed how construction companies will operate for the coming 12-18 months. The Taoiseach effectively shut the industry down on March 28th to stop the spread of COVID-19. The industry must be prepared to return to work when the Government decide that restrictions are relaxed; most likely on a gradual basis.

It's a simple equation: the industry must operate safely, or activity will be suspended again due to health concerns. COVID-19 related restrictions are likely to be a factor in business for the next 12-18 months before a vaccine is widely available.



The CIF has been advising its members on how to adjust to this changed environment. This document is a compilation of the key guidance notes circulated to our members during this period. It is a synthesis of the accumulated knowledge of the CIF's expert staff and its membership. As such, it is unparalleled and unrivalled in its scope, detail and value to anyone operating in construction.

The Federation is now making this available to anyone operating in construction. Helping all companies to adapt to the changed environment is the best way to secure this industry's future in the immediate and longer term. We're all in this together.

COVID-19 affects all aspects of business from dealing with your staff, your clients and the public. This document will help you prepare your organisation to restart activity. The key areas for you to considered are:

- 1. Health and Safety**
- 2. Industrial Relations**
- 3. Contractual issues**
- 4. Sub-contractor issues**
- 5. Virtual Construction and Design**
- 6. Planning and development**

Please take time to review the following documentation and bear in mind the Covid-19 situation is constantly evolving. The CIF will be regularly updating guidance information to members on a near daily basis as we prepare to return to work.

If you are interested in more information from the CIF in future or to discuss membership, please feel free to contact bwalsh@cif.ie.

Tom Parlon
Director General

Preparing to return to work

Construction Industry Federation

- 1.** Review the CIF's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and embed in your work practices.
- 2.** Examine Government employment support such as the Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme and supports for businesses.
- 3.** Consult with your clients on the plan to implement the CIF's new SOP.
- 4.** Where necessary, ensure you discuss with your client, and apply for any necessary extensions of time and applications for increased costs as a result of the imposition of C19 restrictions.
- 5.** Ensure all directly and indirectly employed staff have undergone the CIF's COVID-19 safety induction programme and have a digital card.
- 6.** Monitor the implementation of the CIF's SOP on site.
- 7.** Appoint a COVID-19 compliance officer.
- 8.** Consider technological solutions for staff working from home.
- 9.** Make yourself familiar with constantly evolving timelines in terms of the planning, procurement, and building regulations.
- 10.** Engage with suppliers and your subcontractors to identify any future supply chain issues.

Final check-list before returning to work

- ▶ Familiarise yourself and your management team with the Construction Sector Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedure.
- ▶ Carry out a safety review for each site and put in place a restart plan for each site i.e. ensure all relevant PPE can be sourced and secured before work commences etc.
- ▶ Appoint and brief a COVID-19 Compliance Officer.
- ▶ Ensure all sub-contractors have the SOP and are adopting it in their work practices. Traditional work practices may be required to change to comply with the SOP.
- ▶ Ensure everyone undergoes the CIF's online induction programme. Every worker. Every officer. All management that will visit a site and insist any unscheduled visitors also complete the induction before entry is permitted
- ▶ Brief security/appointed staff on how to validate the digital cards. Only workers who have successfully completed the induction will have a digital card.
- ▶ Brief your workers on the SOP to reinforce the messages at weekly briefings.
- ▶ Ensure workers travel to work individually where possible.
- ▶ Ensure workers do not congregate on the way to site, on-site or leaving the site. Make sure they don't go to local shops or take lunch in groups.
- ▶ Initially send in a small team to repurpose the site to meet the demands of the new SOP.
- ▶ Place the official notice/permission to work on the hoarding of the site naming the project and relevant associated Local Authority.
- ▶ Place posters (in link below), in prominent position inside the site but also on external hoarding.
- ▶ Appoint an appropriate person to talk to members of the public if queries arise.
- ▶ Inform local Gardai of your intention and permission to carry out work in advance and during the course of works.

Section 1: Health and Safety

Dermot Carey ► Director, Safety and Training

To maintain the safety of on-site workers and staff, once restrictions are eased it is vital that all contractors returning to work adhere to the procedures set out in the new 'CIF Construction Sector COVID-19 Pandemic Operating Procedures' (SOPs) document. Failure to do so will result in work being halted again, and possibly for a more extended period.



With that in mind, I recommend you put the following five measures in place to ensure workers can work safely on site in compliance with new COVID-19 guidelines.

1. Consult the new CIF Standard Operating Procedures and assess if your workforce can operate safely before anyone returns to site.
2. Speak to your insurance advisor about the implications of implementing the SOP onsite.
3. Speak to your client about the productivity issues that will arise as a result of the new SOP and its impact on programme time and costs.
4. Ensure that your workforce and those of sub-contractors have read and understand their responsibilities under the SOPs document and undergone the CIF's induction programme.
5. Speak to all subcontractors about their responsibilities and working procedures in terms of meeting the requirements set out in the SOPs document.

I recommend that you consult the following key documents:

1. CIF Standard Operating Procedure
2. CIF COVID-19 Induction Programme
3. The CIF's schedule for webinar-led training
 - a. April (Part 1)
 - b. April (Part 2)
 - c. May / June
4. Skillnet training schedule
5. Induction Programme Posters

Section 2: **Industrial and Employee Relations**

Jean Winters ► Director, Industrial Relations
and Employment Services



In the event of the Government lifting restrictions employers reactivating on-site workforces should consider the following critical aspects of industrial relations in any remobilisation strategy.

1. Establish the number of workers that are on temporary lay-off and which Government income support schemes are being utilised.
2. Estimate the timeframe for skills requirements, and the rate at which operations need to be scaled-up on various sites.
3. Agree on the selection criteria for recalling workers from temporary lay-off.
4. Establish any training/re-training needs of workers before they return to site
5. Draft a template letter for recalling workers from temporary lay-off to include the date on which they are required and details of any new operational procedures.

I recommend that you consult the following critical documents:

1. Latest Information note on the government income support schemes
2. Government Support SchemesFlow Chart
3. COVID-19 Income Support Schemes FAQs 8th of april dated
4. FAQ document on managing employee absence:

Section 3: **Tendering and Contracting**

Paul Sheridan ► Director of Main Contracting



The announcement by the Taoiseach on the 28th March effectively shut down construction sites. This shutdown has generated unavoidable and unforeseeable costs for contractors. It's vital to ensure that contractors and clients collaborate to facilitate returning to site. A key challenge will be sharing the burden of any additional costs and delays arising from adapting HSE guidelines across all construction activity. Without this collaboration, issues will inevitably end up in disputes causing further delays. Contractors should consider the following five steps in building collaboration with clients.

1. Engage with your client in assessing the impact of COVID-19 on existing contracts.
2. Refer to your contracts and review our recent contractual related circulars for advice around standard contracts provisions related to notices, delays, costs and instructions.
3. Collaborate with your clients on remobilisation costs, using the CIF's SOP as a discussion document.
4. Remain in contact your insurance brokers particularly when restarting activity.
5. Continue to consult with the CIF's Contract and Tendering Department that can access an extensive network of internal and third party experts.

I recommend that you consult the following key documents:

1. **Frequently Asked Questions on Contractual Issues**
2. **Government's list of Essential Services allowed to continue working**
3. **Watch the Contractual Issues Webinar**
4. **Information on Ex-Gratia Payments on Public Works Contracts**
5. **Impact of EMPI legislation & industry shut down on contracts**

Section 4: **Planning and Development**

James Benson ► Housing, Planning & Development



On 29th March, the Government introduced an Order under Section 251A of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended), to extend public consultation periods for planning related matters. The since updated order will have a profound impact on all current planning applications, submissions and approvals.

The Irish Homebuilders Association has created a residential sector remobilisation implementation framework. It details how the housebuilding sector can safely increase activity in delivering private residential units operating within the parameters of the HSE's guidelines through adoption of the CIF's SOP.

The following five steps should be taken to ensure that your projects are ready to recommence when restrictions are eased and that all planning related matters are addressed in the interim.

- 1.** Keep updated on all planning and development amendments during the COVID-19 emergency that will be made available on the CIF website.
- 2.** Analyse the current status of projects and assess their ability to recommence activity under the IHBA remobilisation implementation framework and SOP documents.
- 3.** Engage with clients and stakeholders to introduce revised risk assessments and protocols to allow works to recommence and ensure all employees complete the CIF's online induction.
- 4.** Plan for a staged transitional return to activities.
- 5.** All new site measures and protocols should constantly monitored and constantly reviewed with management and staff.

I recommend that you consult the following essential CIF guidance notes:

- 1. Planning and development Frequently Asked Questions**
- 2. IHBA return to work protocol and remobilisation framework**
- 3. Flowchart on the planning and development system amendments** (Download)
- 4. Impact of COVID-19 on Building Control Regulations**

Section 5: **Specialist Contractors**

Sean Downey ► Director, Specialist Contracting

A substantial number of specialist contractors continue to play a pivotal role in the delivery of services for essential operations in medical, pharma and manufacturing facilities. The key to sustaining your business at this challenging time is to engage in constructive dialogue with clients to prepare for operations to start up again without fear of penalties being imposed.



Companies should follow these five steps to ensure that your operations are ready for when restrictions are eased.

- 1.** Review contracts and initiative discussions seek direction from the client and main contractors. on Covid-19 related delays.
- 2.** Take a cooperative approach with clients to discuss an extension of time and any additional costs that have accrued.
- 3.** If there is no cooperation from the client, ensure protective measures are in place and appoint appropriate people to manage disputes.
- 4.** Study the new CIF SOPs document to establish if you can make the appropriate adjustments to your operating procedures to return to work and assess what impact these will have on your costs and productivity.
- 5.** Familiarise all your team members with the SOPs document and ensure that they fully understand what is required of them to comply with it.

I recommend that you consult the following critical guidance notes:

- 1.** Subcontractor Guidance Note on contracts
- 2.** Subcontractor updated Guidance note on contracts
- 3.** Refer the CIF's online webinar on contractual issues

Section 6: **Virtual construction and design**

Sean Downey ► Director, Specialist Contracting

COVID-19 fundamentally alters the construction industry and how members operate. Similar to other sectors, working from home and social distancing are now a reality. The Construction 4.0 Committee has developed a guidance note to help members engage effectively in virtual construction and design with dispersed workforces.



Organisations should focus on creating the right conditions for their team to succeed. Some lessons learned that organisations should be mindful before setting out on this journey:

1. Technology is always changing - knowing where to start is not obvious, and the learning process never ends. Members are advised to review the CIF guides on BIM as a starting point to analyse the potential technological improvements they could introduce.
2. For most people, implementing/using technology requires learning a new set of skills, and the learning curve can be steep. Resistance will occur, ensure opportunity for resistance is removed.
3. Embracing and implementing technology does not guarantee future success; in fact, most tech professionals and innovators will recommend the “fail fast” model - fail fast, learn, move on.
4. There are no right answers - but informed decisions based on calculated risk and perceived rewards.

I recommend that you consult the following critical guidance notes:

1. Guidance on Virtual Construction and Design
2. Links to Virtual Construction & Design poster

Section 7: Other Useful Resources and Documentation

The CIF has engaged extensively with Government and third party stakeholders to ensure its members are best placed to return to work and survive and thrive in the new construction environment. The CIF is constantly updating information available to members on www.cif.ie/coronavirus. We encourage you to join our federation so you can ensure your business can access the CIF's unparalleled expertise and become part of the most effective network in Irish business.

The CIF is also creating a shop window space where companies can promote special offers exclusive to CIF member on products and service. Keep an eye on the CIF website for more details.

Some further useful links and guidance notes are included below:

- ▶ [HSE COVID-19 information page](#)
- ▶ [Health Service Executive](#)
- ▶ [Health Protection Surveillance Centre \(HPSC\)](#)
- ▶ [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for travel advice](#)
- ▶ [World Health Organisation](#)
- ▶ [Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation provide a checklist of preparatory actions in responding to COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [The Health and Safety Authority](#)
- ▶ [Key contractual issues for organisations to consider from ByrneWallace](#)
- ▶ [Revenue announce measures to assist SMEs experiencing cashflow difficulties arising from COVID-19](#)



Join the CIF now!

The CIF is one of Europe's leading construction representative bodies. Our team of experts have unparalleled experience and expertise providing guidance to members on the full range of issues. Over the past 80 years, the CIF has supported generations of companies to **get set, get work and get paid**. So much so, that membership of the CIF is considered a prerequisite for public and private sector clients when working with construction companies. The CIF members' benefits from the decades of accumulated knowledge and networks, our staff have developed within the industry, the public sector and internationally.

We are a not-for-profit membership body and a federation of bodies representing every sector in the Irish construction industry. This allows us to provide world-class expertise and service to our members at a fraction of the cost of professional service organisations, consultancies and legal firms.

In addition to this, the current pandemic shows the benefit of being a member of the CIF in times of crisis. We have helped hundreds of members to navigate through these turbulent times.

And we can help you.

If you, or any of your subcontractors/supply chain are interested in benefitting from being part of this federation, please contact **Bernadine Walsh**, (bwalsh@cif.ie) or complete a CIF membership application by [clicking here](#).

The list of the CIF's existing members can be found on our [website](#) here:





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