

Health and Safety Statement

COVID-19

In addition to the Company's Health and Safety Policy and other policies relating to the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, the following statement is provided to ensure the protection of all employees and our clients.

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of virus called a coronavirus. Wildwood Ecology has been closely monitoring the coronavirus situation since early March 2020 and is following the advice of the UK authorities as new information is made available¹.

The health and well-being of our staff, clients, subcontractors and suppliers remains our highest priority. Thankfully, our provision of great advice does not have to happen in an office or group environment. Because of this, we have been able to take steps to ensure business continuity through this uncertain period.

The information provided below has been updated following confirmation from the Department for Environment & Rural Affairs (DERA) to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in a letter dated 09 April 2020. The letter stated that *"ecologists and environmental professional should therefore be able to continue with outdoor work, including ecological surveying and supervision, where they can continue to follow Public Health England guidelines."*² Further updates have also been provided following IUCN Bat Specialist Group³ recommendations made on 12th April and by DERA on 28 May 2020 (a PDF prepared by DERA entitled 'Covid-19 guidance for NE - wildlife surveying and mitigation works').

Last updated: 01 June 2020

We have changed our behaviour, and this may affect the way we undertake some of our services. First off, we are largely working from home and only need to access the office for post and to pick up any equipment. We are fortunate to be able to work from home with capacity to access all our client's files using our remote server. Likewise, our project management software is 'cloud' based and likely to remain issue free. The provision of reporting documents to our clients is not therefore an issue.

With regards to field surveys, these will largely remain unaffected and we can deliver most services. The exception being that as from 24 March 2020 we shall avoid all internal inspections where a person or persons are present or will likely be present (unless they have left the building whilst we undertake the survey). Exceptions being will be vacant buildings, where no person or persons will be present for the foreseeable future and non-dwelling buildings. We do not see that the use of hand sanitizer alone will be an effective measure should any person or persons (including occupants and surveyors) carry COVID-19 coronavirus.

¹ Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19) by the UK Government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-coronavirus-covid-19>

² Following direct contact with Defra, CIEEM received this letter regarding ecological and environmental professionals continuing to work during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic <https://cieem.net/resource/defra-letter-ecological-environmental-professionals-coronavirus/>

³ IUCN Bat Specialist Group Recommendations: <https://www.iucnbsg.org/>

With regards to travelling, up to 2 persons per vehicle will be allowed from 01 June 2020. As a gesture of good will to our clients where projects were confirmed on or before 19 March 2020, we shall not pass additional costs on where we must use two or more vehicles to attend a site to undertake a survey or assessment. Employees shall be reimbursed if they use their own transport at the normal rate. However, we will continue to ensure that services are in line with our lone-working policy. For all projects confirmed after 19 March and before 30 April 2020 we may have to revise this cost element.

If it gets to the point where three or more people must use a vehicle, then we will revise if we should undertake the work. We will either postpone, add as a limitation to the service report, or refuse the work, in that order. This is both a commercial and environmental decision. It will obviously cost more in terms of both mileage and greenhouse gas emissions. Rest assured, we will seek to make the right decision at the right time and keep you fully informed, but please do accept our sincere apologies for any additional charges that may be made.

Guidance on work under COVID-19

Before attending a site visit, please self-certify that the following statements are true:

- I and others due to undertake a site visit are, as far as I am aware, healthy and not subject to any requirements⁴ for self-isolation.
- The number of surveyors attending the site visit is the absolute minimum required for the services to be adequately performed with little or no limitations that would invalidate those services being undertaken, but also conforms to the Company's own lone-working policy and all other health and safety procedures currently put in place by the Company.
- The undertaking of the site visit does not create an unacceptable risk to any other person, including those we anticipate meeting on site or members of the general public.
- The use of overnight accommodation can be avoided.
- No internal access within an occupied building will be undertaken and where it would usually be required this will be noted within any completed reporting as a true and valid limitation to survey effort where guidelines for such an inspection and assessment have been stipulated.
- Each surveyor will arrive and leave the site in a vehicle where they are the sole occupant and will keep a minimum of 2 metres apart from each other.
- Each surveyor has access to clean water and soap to enable them to wash prior to and immediately after attending a site visit and assessment or, as an alternative until those facilities can be used, hand sanitising gel.

If self-certification is successfully passed, then the following precautions must also be followed. Where that is not possible, then the site visit must be postponed until either the conditions above can be met, or restrictions lifted or cancelled with immediate effect. Where a site visit is cancelled it is the responsibility of the Project Manager to inform the relevant person or persons as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Travelling

- Public transport must not be used under any circumstances.
- Surveyors should individually travel to and from the site using an appropriate vehicle.
- Each company vehicle will be available for use by one nominated employee under this additional policy. No sharing of a company vehicle is to be permitted unless the vehicle is thoroughly cleansed before any new driver takes ownership, with the responsibility of the cleansing under the direction and control of the new driver.
- Where an employee does not have use of a company vehicle then they are to use their own personal vehicle, which must be insured for business use, and must keep and submit their own record for any mileage claims made.
- Hire cars may only be used where you have been given assurance by the hire car company that adequate deep clean measures are being implemented in between hirers.

⁴ To familiarise yourself with the symptoms associated with coronavirus, please visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

- Surveyors must ensure that they are carrying enough alcohol-based sanitiser (60%-95% alcohol). If you need to purchase hand sanitizer, then ensure you keep a valid receipt and you will be reimbursed.
- When refueling the driver must wear a pair of gloves before touching any fuel station equipment. After refueling the driver will dispose of the gloves in a forecourt bin before paying for the fuel using a fuel card (where associated with a company vehicle) or other card payment. Once payment has been made, sanitise your hands before returning to the vehicle.
- Identify location of nearest publicly accessible building (likely to be a supermarket) with handwashing facilities and use their welfare facilities during the journey and survey to wash your hands thoroughly with soap following previously issued guidance.

Accommodation

- The use of overnight accommodation is not permitted. Employees should be able to return home after a site survey has been completed. Alternatively, local subcontractors should be used.

Food and drink

- It is your responsibility to ensure that you take your own food and drink with you when on a site visit and not to rely on purchasing food from a store.
- Before eating or drinking whilst on site, you should wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water. As a last resort, then the use of an alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended.

Working in areas containing bats

On 12th April, the IUCN Bat Specialist Group issued recommendations around the suspension of bat fieldwork, where handling bats or entering roosts was involved. The IUCN recommendations were issues to reduce any possibility of transmission of the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2) from humans to bats. Currently there is a high level of uncertainty about the likelihood of such transmission being possible. The recommendations apply the precautionary principle whilst a group of researchers are undertaking rapid risk assessments and we hope they will share their findings as soon as these are available for each global geographic region (they are starting with North America).

As a professional consultancy service, we will adhere to CIEEM advice for ecologists and environmental professionals, as well as reviewing the likely risk to our employees, suppliers and clients as a result of services that may be required to be undertaken where bats are present.

Therefore, our current position is that we shall not handle bats unless there is a just reason for doing so that will be limited to a risk of stress, anxiety or injury (mental or physical) to an employee, supplier or client by not doing so. Where handling of a bat does occur then this may only be undertaken by a licensed bat ecologist who shall wear appropriate PPE (including the provision of gloves and facial protection to avoid inhalation of airborne particles by the licensed bat ecologist or the animal itself). After removal and relocation of the bat the licensed bat ecologist will then wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more and ensure that a record of their action has been noted against the project. Surveys for bats where physical contact is not anticipated or necessary within an area may proceed as normal with no additional restrictions.

Further advice has now been issued by DERA on 28 May 2020, which states that anyone interacting with wildlife for the purposes of field survey and mitigation works in England should (in addition to the advice above):

1. Make efforts to keep your distance (at least 2 m) from live wild mammals at all times.
2. Limit capturing or handling live wild mammals to where this is necessary.
3. Avoid sustained close proximity (within 2 m) to known burrows, dens, roosts, or other breeding or regularly used resting sites of mammals, where possible.

If it is not possible to follow the precautions set out above due to the nature of the activity, then the following best practice advice will be applied:

1. Close proximity and handling of mammals will be kept to a minimum. This includes limiting the number of people that come into close proximity or handle the mammals.
2. Keep animals separate from other individuals, as much as reasonably possible.
3. Disposable gloves and a face covering will be worn when handling, and if in sustained close proximity to, any mammal.
4. Follow good hygiene practices and wash hands before and after close proximity or handling any mammal.
5. All equipment should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. Any non-disposable gloves that have been used for mammal handling and face coverings should be thoroughly washed between uses.

General advice

- All public areas must be avoided. A distance on 2m or greater must be maintained between all persons.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze; dispose of used tissues responsibly and clean your hands afterwards using soap and clean water.
- Disinfect survey equipment, where appropriate, before passing it to others.
- Carry a charged mobile phone with enough credit, and ensure you are able to use the WhatsApp Wildwood Team platform and that your line manager has that mobile number, to allow immediate communication where rapid changes are required in response to Covid-19 issues.
- If you develop symptoms that indicate a possible infection with Covid-19 (coughing, sneezing or high fever), you should IMMEDIATELY withdraw from fieldwork and self-isolate in accordance with the government guidance in force at the time of onset. Please also inform your line manager or leave a message on the WhatsApp group message board that you plan to self-isolate as soon as it practicably possible, so that others who may be at risk from contact with you may be alerted. We will need to know about your recent (last 72 hours) movements so we know who has been in contact with you and which surfaces (e.g. vehicles or equipment) you are likely to have been in contact with.
- All employees should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or more and more frequently than normal.

Finally, if you believe that you or another person will be at risk either by your action or the action of others to coronavirus, then please do reevaluate your work and return home as soon as possible. You should not be put under pressure by the Company or a colleague to attend a site visit against your will. If you believe that you are being placed into a situation that would compromise your physical or mental health, then please do raise the issue with your line manager or a senior member of staff. You will not be penalised for raising a concern!

This is a dynamic statement and is likely to change. Possibly daily. So please do ensure you keep up to date with both company updates and government advice. You are the most important part of this Company and together we can keep each other safe and ensure that we all stay physically and emotionally strong.

Signed by:



PRINT NAME:

RICHARD DODD

Date:

01 June 2020 Time: 10:45am

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