

Engineering Inspection: Guidance for Property Owners during COVID-19



Gallagher is pleased to present the second of our bulletins aimed at supporting and advising Property Owners during potentially extended periods, where their assets may sit at least partially vacant. In this edition, we look at the implications for engineering inspections being carried out on business critical items of plant such as lifts and heating/cooling systems.

What is the issue?

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister on March 23rd, there has been fresh uncertainty around whether Engineering Surveyors are deemed to be “key workers.” Insurers have been lobbying the Government in order to allow Engineering Surveyors to continue to undertake their duties. This lobbying has been in order to clarify that surveyors can continue to travel for work, in order to continue to support certain critical industry sectors.

What has been the outcome?

This lobbying has resulted in further advice to insurers from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The view following this advice of the Safety Assessment Federation (SAFed), who represent the UK’s independent engineering inspection and certification industry, is that engineering inspection work for critical industries, and indeed those within their supply chain, can continue, as in this regard, those Engineering Surveyors are deemed to be “key workers.” Insurers are now prioritising industry sectors by criticality, with priority being given to businesses and plant that are, in their own opinion, crucial for the treatment and containment of the virus, and/or our country’s infrastructure. The “rule of thumb” they are using in this regard is that if a business remains open during the current restrictions, it is most likely they deem this to be critical.

What is the Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE’s) position?

At the time of writing, the HSE’s stance is “there is currently no derogation in respect of the provisions of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 or its associated statutory provisions at this present time.”¹ In other words, as a business owner, you still have a statutory duty to adequately maintain your plant and equipment, and to ensure you comply with all relevant legislation, and there will be no “relaxation” of the rules due to the exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in.

Source:

1. [Safed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Final-Stat-doc.pdf](https://www.safed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Final-Stat-doc.pdf)



What is our advice to Property Owners?

Gallagher recommends a thorough review with your client facing team of all business critical plant, looking at testing and certification that you have due in the coming weeks and months. This should be collated, along with an early conversation with your relevant insurer(s) and provider(s) to ensure that all necessary testing can and will be carried out in a timely manner, and prior to the expiration of existing certificates. Should you have any concerns in this regard or require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team.

Would you like to talk?

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