

Corona protocol

Working Together Safely

for the Construction & Engineering industry

The 'Working Together Safely' corona protocol for the Construction & Engineering industry is supported by: Aedes, AFNL, Arbo Techniek, Bouwend Nederland, CNV Vakmensen, FNV Bouwen en Wonen, FNV Metaal, GeoBusiness, NEPROM, NOA, NVKL, OnderhoudNL, Techniek Nederland, VEBIDAK, VHG, VIB, Vollandis, Waterbouwers, Wij Techniek,

Version 24
30/08/2022

Contents

Overview of changes	2
Introduction.....	3
The sector plan's starting point.....	3
A safe and healthy workplace for everyone.....	3
Communication	3
Reporting of non-compliance with the corona protocol.....	4
1 Cold scenario	5
1.1 Explanation	5
1.2 Objective.....	5
1.3 Control the risk at source	5
1.4 Technical and organisational measures	6
1.5 Personal protective equipment.....	7
1.6 Health	8

Overview of changes

We will adjust the 'Working Together Safely' corona protocol for the Construction & Engineering industry as often as necessary in line with the pandemic's developments. The measures in place for the construction and engineering industry have been tightened and eased several times over the past two years. We haven't included an overview of those changes in this protocol.

The current corona protocol contains the Construction & Engineering industry sector plan's scenario 1 'cold' measures.

Introduction

This corona protocol has been compiled with measures previously agreed in a long series of corona protocols for the construction and engineering industry. We have also included the 'Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk' experiences, information from the central government, medical guidelines and epidemiological information. All preventive measures for the construction and engineering industry have been arranged under the Dutch government's four corona scenarios in the sector plan. In order of severity: cold, flu +, continuous struggle and worst case. The scenario in force at any given time will determine the measures which apply to the construction and engineering industry. This method proved successful over the past two years in order to be able to continue working safely.

This sector plan offers clarity to businesses, residents, clients, customers and all those working in the construction, engineering and installation sectors regarding safe working procedures during the corona pandemic. The first corona protocol for the construction and engineering industry was established by employers' organisations and trade unions in March 2020, in collaboration with the industries' knowledge institutes, the RIVM and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The protocol has since been continuously maintained and adjusted where necessary by social partners in the construction and engineering industry. We will continue to do so for the sector plan.

The sector plan is intended as a guideline for the safe execution of activities in the construction and engineering industry. There may be justifiable reasons for parties to deviate from the sector plan if a situation demands it. A Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk has been set up for this, which can be accessed via: www.helpdeskcorona-bt.nl. This is a central counter for questions and information.

The sector plan's starting point

The sector plan is based on the occupational hygiene strategy, or rather the source approach. This choice will result in a minimal claim on personal protective equipment usage. Exceptions are special situations, like work in care institutions. You start off with introducing measures which will prevent people from working in an environment with contamination risks. If that's not possible, technical and organisational measures will need to be introduced to prevent contamination. And finally, there are specific situations where you'll still have to use personal protective equipment.

A safe and healthy workplace for everyone

Employers must provide a safe and healthy workplace for everyone. This duty of care also applies to the risks associated with the coronavirus. The employer has implemented the 'working together safely' sector plan measures for this purpose.

It's everyone's responsibility to prevent the spread of the virus and to be able to work safely. This requires good and responsible collaborations, with extra attention devoted to vulnerable people. We hope everyone will comply with the sector plan's guidelines. Talk to each other in case of work situations where this may be difficult. Correct each other if necessary. Look for a suitable solution together.

Communication

The central government has made [means of communication](#) available in simple Dutch and other languages. These posters and flyers can be used both within the company and at the construction site. Social partners have their own channels of communication (e.g. via the [Construction &](#)

[Engineering Corona Help Desk](#), [Vollandis](#) and [ArboTechniek](#)). Posters associated with the sector plan can be downloaded in various different languages via the help desk's website, in relation to construction sites, working in private properties and working at the office. The help desk can also provide practical information such as frequently asked questions, toolboxes, posters about working and travelling together for customers.

Inform everyone in the company or active at the construction site about the measures in force, the working methods opted for, the mode of travel, how breaks are arranged and who is responsible for corona. This can be done, for example, with an (online) toolbox.

Reporting of non-compliance with the corona protocol

The sector plan provides general frameworks and guidelines. Start with contacting your employer, client or company if you have any doubts about someone's compliance with the protocol. If you're unable to find a suitable solution together, you can report this to the Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk.

1 Cold scenario

1.1 Explanation

You'll usually just experience mild symptoms when infected with the coronavirus in the 'cold' scenario. The clinical picture resembles a cold. There's no great pressure on GP's and healthcare institutions. It's everyone's responsibility to contribute to prevention and to take vulnerable people into account.

1.2 Objective

Taking vulnerable people into account, both at work and with residents. Promote all workers' personal health.

1.3 Control the risk at source

The coronavirus is going to be an occupational risk until no more measures are needed. Find out who's at risk and which preventive measures you can introduce at work. The Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk has produced a [checklist](#) as a tool for expanding the RI&E. The checklist was later included in various construction and engineering industries' RI&E.

Prepare a task risk analysis (TRA) for activities with special risks, like working in a care department with corona patients, or an Intensive Care Unit.

Please note!

Devote extra attention to communicating with non-Dutch speaking workers and migrant workers. If possible, communicate in their own language, or in an internationally accepted language. Use posters for clarification.

1.3.1 Working from home

Support and facilitate employees to partially work from home (hybrid working).

Please be considerate of each other. Someone with concerns about their fragile health must also be able to continue working safely.

1.3.2 Symptoms, testing and staying at home

Stay at home, or go home, in case of the following symptoms:

- Flu-like symptoms (a cold, runny nose, sneezing)
- A sore throat
- A cough
- Breathlessness or shortness of breath
- A raised temperature or fever
- A sudden loss of smell and/or taste without nasal congestion.

Do a corona self-test as soon as possible with any of the above symptoms. You also need to do this if you've been vaccinated. Discuss things with the company doctor or your GP if necessary.

- Stay at home, or go home, in case of a positive result.
- You can continue working in case of mild symptoms and a negative self-test, but do be careful: preferably keep a minimum distance of 1.5 meters from others, avoid contact with vulnerable people.

- Repeat the self-test the following day.

Don't go to work if you're infected with the coronavirus:

- Stay in isolation for a minimum of 5 days.
- Inform any close contacts from the previous two days (both work and private).
- You can return to work after 5 days in case of mild symptoms, providing you have been symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours.
- You must remain in isolation for 10 days if you have been ill for longer or more seriously.
- Discuss things with the company doctor or your GP if necessary.
- Use self-care advice from the [central government](#) and [GP's](#).

1.3.3 Quarantine

Quarantine is not necessary in the 'cold' scenario.

However, do avoid close contact with vulnerable people for 10 days following high risk contact. Pay extra attention to developing symptoms during these days. Then test yourself with a self-test as soon as possible.

1.3.4 Travelling for work

No additional measures are required if you're abiding by the previous two paragraphs.

1.3.5 Travel rules for cross-border workers and migrant workers

There are no travel rules for cross-border workers and there are no travel rules for migrant workers in the Netherlands either.

1.3.6 Exception for essential (vital) business processes

You may continue to work, providing you have no symptoms and no positive self-test in case of symptoms. Pay extra careful attention to protecting your health if you're vulnerable.

1.4 Technical and organisational measures

1.4.1 The person responsible for corona

Appoint an employee at the work location(s) who is responsible and who will be the point of contact for any precautionary measures against coronavirus infections.

1.4.2 Hygiene

Abide by the following general hygiene measures¹.

- Regularly wash your hands (at least 6 times a day) with soap and water, according to the instructions². And always before meals, after going to the toilet, after using public transport and after cleaning.
- Use soap dispensers and disposable paper towels.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow.
- Bring your own paper tissues and dispose of these immediately after use. Then wash your hands.

¹ According to the RIVM's [hygiene guidelines](#).

²Please note: regularly washing or disinfecting your hands will decrease the skin. This will reduce your skin's barrier function. Therefore make sure you regularly apply a nourishing hand cream.

1.4.3 Keep your distance

Keep a distance of 1.5 metres at the request of vulnerable people.

1.4.3.1 Working at private properties

Enter into agreements with the residents, users or the private client, in order to be able to work safely. Wear a medical face mask (type II or IIR) during close contact moments if requested to do so.

1.4.3.2 Shops and showrooms

No measures, visitors' own responsibility.

1.4.3.3 Education, training and courses

No measures, participants' own responsibility.

1.4.4 Cleaning

Clean as normal.

1.4.5 Ventilation

Make sure the work and office areas are well ventilated:

- Make sure the ventilation complies with the rules set out in the [building code](#).
- 24 m³ of fresh air per hour is needed per person.
- Ventilate 24 hours a day via windows, grilles or a mechanical ventilation system.
- Regularly air a room for 10-15 minutes after this has been used by several people.

1.4.6 Face masks

Someone suffering from vulnerable health can ask co-workers to wear a face mask when working within 1.5 metres. Have you been in close contact with someone who has tested positive? Then make sure you also wear a face mask for 10 days during any contact with vulnerable people. Use a single use medical face mask (type II or IIR) for this. Wear a FFP2 face mask yourself if you're vulnerable.

Please note!

Don't wear a face mask or face shield in the following situations:

- When a face mask or face shield presents a risk during the task.
- The task requires the wearing of respiratory protection.

1.5 Personal protective equipment

Wearing personal protective equipment is only necessary if this is apparent from the RI&E or task risk analysis (TRA) for work at care locations and/or medical facilities. Protection may be required for multiple biological agents (such as viruses, bacteria and fungi) at the same time.

Possible personal protective equipment:

- Disposable gloves³, any type of quality will suffice;
- Disposable overall;
- Disposable slippers;
- Safety goggles (disposables, or otherwise disinfect);
- Disposable medical face mask type II or IIR, if necessary FFP2 or FFP3.

³For example, nitrile, PVC, latex, butyl rubber

1.6 Health

Optimal health will help to prevent infections. There will be a greater chance that the severity of your health problems will remain limited and that you'll recover more quickly if you do fall ill. So take good care of yourself. Stay physically and mentally fit.

Important preventive measures:

- Sport, exercise or work in a [sufficiently](#) active manner.
- Maintain a healthy weight (Body Mass Index (BMI) up to 25). Work towards a lower weight if you're overweight.
- Discuss work pressure and stress with your colleagues and manager. Look for solutions and improvements together. Keep supporting each other.
- Don't smoke or [stop](#) smoking.
- Get your vaccinations and booster shots based on the [central government](#)'s advice.

How is your health?

Participate with your company or industry's occupational health (PAGO) or preventive medical examination (PMO). This will provide you with an insight into your health and appropriate advice in relation to how to work on improvements. The [Construction & Engineering Corona Help Desk](#) website will help you on your way. Each industry has its own interpretation of the PAGO or PMO.

If you can't participate with a PAGO or PMO in the short term, then a [sports medical](#) for athletes would be a good alternative.

Persistent health problems after COVID-19

Not everyone recovers from a coronavirus infection within a few weeks. Recovery from the condition can take longer, with plenty of ups and downs. We refer to it as 'post-COVID syndrome' if symptoms persist for three months after the infection. Recovery is often possible.

Important measures for a lasting recovery include:

- Restore the energy balance (don't take on more than you can handle).
- Avoid overloading.
- Dose and vary efforts, both mentally and physically.
- Take plenty of time to rest after exerting yourself.
- Slowly build up your activities, both privately and at work.
- Ask the company doctor for advice, prepare an 'action plan' for improving your health and for your return to work.
- As an employer, offer tailor-made solutions, based on the company doctor's advice and practical experiences.