

COVID-19 : INDUSTRY GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE FOR AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET

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COVID-19 Protective Measures: Automotive Aftermarket Sector Industry Guidance and Best Practice

Introduction

During this unprecedented time, companies of all sizes will be challenged with how to safely operate while minimising the risk of Covid-19 transmission amongst employees or their wider community.

This industry guidance and best practice document has been developed with the Garage Equipment Association (GEA), Independent Automotive Aftermarket Federation (IAAF), the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI), the Scottish Motor Trade Association (SMTA) and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders Ltd (SMMT) for use by the automotive aftermarket sector. It has been compiled from a wide range of best practice and guidance documents but is by no means an exhaustive list. It is intended to complement official guidance and the work of other trade associations. It should be used in accordance with the latest Government advice which may change over time.

This guidance may be used as part of a full risk assessment, which should be carried out for each site. Such a risk assessment would normally be required to be carried out in cooperation with staff or workforce representatives and in advance of (re)starting operations.

It is important to ensure all guidance is available to staff and customers in advance of any opening and any visit, in addition to onsite direction, support and signage. Engaging with staff will help overcome any anxiety but also help deliver improvements to the guidance.

This guidance is not a final draft; it should evolve as improvements and issues come to light and will reflect feedback from staff and customers.

Contents

- 1. Disclaimer**
- 2. Objectives of Guidance**
- 3. Scope of Guidance - Key issues and areas to address**
 - 3.1. Guidance and Support**
 - 3.2. Communication and education of customers and colleagues**
 - 3.3. Social Distancing**
 - 3.4. Sanitisation and Hygiene**
 - 3.5. Personal Protective Equipment**
 - 3.6. Use of Digital and other Virtual and Additional Mechanisms**
- 4. Contacts for Further Information**
- 5. Updates**

Updated: 24 September 2020

Section 3 (3.5.i) amended in line with new Government guidance on use of face coverings by staff in retail.

- 1. Disclaimer** GEA / IAAF / IMI / SMTA / SMMT Industry Guidance and Best Practice – COVID-19 Protective Measures: Automotive Aftermarket Sector

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to comply with the current COVID-19 legislation and related Government guidance. Therefore, GEA, IAAF, IMI, SMTA and SMMT information and guidance are not legally binding. Readers should always seek appropriate advice from a suitably qualified expert before taking, or refraining from taking, any action. GEA, IAAF, IMI, SMTA and SMMT disclaim liability for any loss, howsoever caused, arising directly or indirectly from reliance on the information in its industry guidance relating to COVID-19 as published on their websites.

2. Objectives of Guidance

- Ensure a safe environment for employees and customers at all points of interaction in the aftermarket.
- Provide reassurance to employees and customers that appropriate steps have been taken to maintain a clean and safe environment.
- Demonstrate to Government and other stakeholders that the automotive aftermarket sector is prepared for any easement/adaptation of existing coronavirus safety measures and is ready to ramp-up operations.
- Secure Government and third party support for the approach.

3. Scope of Guidance

3.1. Guidance and Support

- See the Government's guidance - [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) – for the latest guidance on operating safely.
- Make staff aware of the [Government guidance on sickness and symptoms](#) – both at home and in the workplace.
- [As required by Government guidance undertake a full risk assessment](#) to put in measures and safeguards appropriate for operations to be carried out safely in consultation with unions or workforce representatives.
- Determine who should return to work and when in light of ongoing and changing Government guidance, as well as existing legal health and safety obligations to ensure necessary support for any individuals with special circumstances, i.e. employees who classify as 'high risk'. NB Working from home if at all possible remains Government's advice.
- Clear messaging for all customers and colleagues, online, on arrival and for collection/delivery – communication is essential.
- Protocols for customers – clearly setting out the experience they will have. From 24 July, in England it is a requirement for all customers to wear a face cover when in a shop, branch, store or similar environment. There are also exemptions for children under the age of 11 and those with a medical condition preventing them from wearing a face cover. Check guidance for the Nations, which may differ.
- Appropriate protocols for staff including training in advance and face coverings for those in indoor settings where they are likely to come into contact with the public
- Protocols for all suppliers and all deliveries.
- Clear policy and process to deal with staff or customers displaying symptoms on site.
- Clear policies on shielding of vulnerable staff or, in the event, customers.
- Appropriate protocols for suppliers – inbound and outbound deliveries in accordance with Government guidelines.

3.2. Communication and education of customers and colleagues

- Print off and display the government's online notice – [Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020](#) - to illustrate to employees and customers that you have followed the government's guidance.

- ii. Highlight the importance of clear communication to customers, employees and other visitors.
- iii. Colleagues should be briefed ahead of any new procedures.
- iv. Appropriate training provided to colleagues on reopening/re-joining or as guidance changes.
- v. Communication given to customers ahead of interactions and what to expect.
- vi. Signage and posters in place to remind customers to observe social distancing measures.
- vii. Markers in place, as necessary, to direct customers and colleagues on where to go.
- viii. Posters in appropriate areas providing guidance on use of sanitisers, hygiene etc.

3.3. Social Distancing

- i. Provide clear guidance to customers and staff - signs, markers, posters – regarding the need to maintain 2m social distancing, wherever possible, in line with Government guidelines.
- ii. Introduce one-way systems for entrance and exits where possible.
- iii. Consider staff transport issues especially if car sharing or using public transport.
- iv. Implement process to manage “walk ins” to ensure social distancing.
- v. Provide guidance on greetings – zero contact i.e. no handshakes, elbow bumping etc.
- vi. Maintain distancing throughout operations (i.e. workshops, warehouse, storage, office spaces, waiting areas, toilets etc.). Where this is not possible, consider what additional steps are required.
- vii. Careful management of customers and colleagues – request interactions involve smallest groups possible (only two people, wherever possible).
- viii. Workshop distancing – consider flexible hours, a drop box for vehicle keys, restrictions of access, reduced ramp usage.
- ix. Warehouse distancing – consider shift patterns, role reassignment, floor markings.
- x. Office and other area – consider layout, avoid face to face configuration, no desk sharing, avoid equipment sharing where possible.
- xi. Mobile operations - location site assessment pre-arrival.
- xii. Vehicles – minimise driver exchanges and develop face covering, ventilation and sanitisation of customer vehicles where these are being collected/delivered
- xiii. Toilets and other communal areas – clear guidance on social distancing measures, remove newspapers, magazines, vending machines etc.
- xiv. Cessation of other services where distancing cannot be maintained e.g. children’s play areas, closure of small reception areas/removal of chair, unsuitable canteens/smoking areas, etc.
- xv. Deliveries – drop parcels off in a designated place at the customers’ premises but ensure social distancing measures are in place.

3.4. Sanitisation and Hygiene

- i. Clear guidance for all employees, customers and colleagues on hygiene measures for people, equipment and vehicles.
- ii. Sanitisation of facilities, surfaces, etc. including, but not limited to: counters, controls, picking equipment, payment devices, computers, door handles, tools, intercoms, etc.
- iii. Ensure sanitising hand gel is available for desks, work stations, services, areas, waiting area, toilets, vehicles, equipment, picking.
- iv. Appropriate liquid soaps recommended and disposable towels instead of hand dryers.
- v. No provision of refreshments.

- vi. Regular cleaning / disinfecting of tools and equipment pre and post use.
- vii. Minimise the sharing of above wherever possible.
- viii. Regular cleaning / disinfecting of vehicle - clean the contact surfaces in the vehicle interior after each inspection or use disposable protective sets for the seat, steering wheel, gear lever, handbrake lever during each job, handover or collection/delivery
- ix. Ventilation of premises and vehicles – maximise ventilation of the premises, wherever possible. Ventilate vehicles after each job, handover or collection/delivery

3.5. Use of Protective Personal Equipment (PPE)

- i. In line with new Government legislation, from 24 September 2020 it will be compulsory for retail (and leisure and hospitality) staff to wear a face covering in areas that are open to the public and where they come or are likely to come within close contact of a member of the public. Businesses are also subject to legal obligations to protect their staff under existing legislation. This includes taking appropriate steps to provide a safe working environment, which may include providing face coverings where appropriate, alongside other mitigation such as Perspex screens to separate workers from the public. For other indoor settings, including collection/delivery of customer vehicles, employers should assess the use of face coverings and other appropriate mitigations they have put in place and whether reasonable exemptions apply. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly. Consider what, if any, appropriate PPE and materials to be made available to all colleagues and/or customers as required. From 24 July, in England it is a requirement for all customers to wear a face cover when in a shop, branch, store or similar environment. Employees are not required to wear a face cover. There are also exemptions for children under the age of 11 and those with a medical condition preventing them from wearing a face cover. Check guidance for the Nations, which may differ. Customers and colleagues to be provided with, and advised of appropriate use, of equipment and sanitisation products when undertaking a delivery or collection.
- ii. Provision of appropriate PPE to staff if social distancing measures cannot be maintained.
- iii. Consider utilisation of clear glass/Perspex screens between colleagues if appropriate (NB if social distancing measures cannot be maintained).
- iv. Consider temperature checks for employees prior to the start of work.
- v. Disposable covers in workshops.

3.6. Digital and other additional mechanisms

- i. Maximise online presence – clearly communicate the consumer experience being offered.
- ii. Strongly advise coordinated appointment schedule and minimised deliveries, vehicle movements/exchanges and interactions wherever possible.
- iii. Removal of all physical material – e.g. flyers, magazines, newspapers, etc.
- iv. Utilisation of live (e.g. pre-visit video calls) and recorded video technology for delivery, vehicle movement/exchange and interaction instructions and expectations.
- v. Collection and delivery service for workshops if appropriate.
- vi. Electronic payments only (e.g. credit card, bank transfers).
- vii. Digital transactions without signatures and paperwork wherever possible.
- viii. Clear protocol for inbound and outbound goods (drivers in vehicles, limit interactions).
- ix. Assess workforce rotas and shifts (pairing system if appropriate) to limit interaction.
- x. Encourage online “virtual” meetings rather than face to face.

- xi. Be mindful of the differing needs of your workforce and consider any measures that may need to be put in place to support certain individuals to help prevent accidental discrimination, i.e. reasonable and necessary adjustments for disabled workers.

4. UK Contacts for Further Information

- Public Health England (PHE): <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
- Health & Safety Executive (HSE):
https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=home-page-banner
- SMMT: <https://www.smmt.co.uk/industry-topics/covid-19-automotive-business-support/>
- GEA: <https://www.gea.co.uk/>
- IAAF: <https://www.iaaf.co.uk/>
- IMI: <https://www.theimi.org.uk/covid>
- SMTA: <https://www.smta.co.uk/>

Links to Government Guidance on COVID-19 and Workplaces:

- Advice on working safely during Covid-19 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- HSE Guidance - 'How to carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment'
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/assessment.htm#>
- Covid-19: guidance for employees, employers and businesses:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>
- Coronavirus (Covid-19): guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- COVID-19: cleaning in non-healthcare settings (If you are cleaning after a known or suspected case of COVID-19 then refer to the specific guidance):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- Government guidance on when to use a face cover:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>
- Government guidance on what is covered under the definition of a shop (or branch):
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches>

- People who are shielding: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/if-youre-at-very-high-risk-from-coronavirus/>
- Respiratory hygiene: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>"><https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control>
- Vulnerable people: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Health and safety is a devolved matter. See the guidance for business in other nations of the UK:

- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Scotland](#)
- [Wales](#)

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