

# COVID-19

## Healthy Hour for Network Rail Colleagues



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# Coronavirus

A coronavirus is a type of virus which affects the respiratory system. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Wuhan novel coronavirus (WN-CoV) is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in China, on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020. It has now been renamed COVID-19.

Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. However not all these symptoms are present in people who have become infected.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

Chinese authorities have confirmed the virus can spread via human-to-human transmission.

There have been cases confirmed in the UK or of UK citizens abroad. The risk level in the UK remains 'moderate'. Network Rail has activated the Strategic Crisis Management Team (SCMT) to help manage the outbreak of COVID-19 and ensure it remains at a high level of preparedness.

Network Rail has more than 40,000 members of staff, interacting with passengers, public and family members everyday, at work, home or even commuting. Its station staff see hundreds of thousands of people arrive and depart each day.

Public Health England (PHE), department for health and other medical organisations have offered some guidance to reduce the risk of exposure, and Network Rail teams are continually monitoring the situation, and have produced information and guidance.

**The safety and welfare of employees is paramount at Network Rail and it is aligning its guidance to that of PHE.**

The following slides will cover:

- General preventative advice for all employees to minimise risk of infection
- Further preventative measures across Network Rail
- Travel advice for all employees
- Additional advice for line managers
- Further information

# General preventative advice for all employees to minimise risk of spreading germs

To minimise the risk of exposure for any virus or infection, colleagues should:

- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating food and after going to the toilet. If soap and water are not available, they should use an anti-viral hand sanitizer, especially after travelling on public transport
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid, where possible, close contact with people who are unwell
- Stay home if they are unwell whether or not this is likely to be related to the Coronavirus to prevent spreading germs
- Cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a waste bin as soon as possible as viruses can live outside the human body for a number of hours
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, remembering to keep their work desk clear of clutter to allow effective cleaning by contractors
- Symptoms of Corona Virus can take up to 14 days to appear, so colleagues should ensure anyone who develops symptoms is aware of the latest guidance.

Reduce your risk of **coronavirus** infection:

 Clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub

Cover nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow 

 Avoid close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms

Thoroughly cook meat and eggs 

 Avoid unprotected contact with live wild or farm animals



## Further preventative measures across Network Rail

The SCMT asks all Network Rail colleagues to follow this advice:

- As a precaution, colleagues are asked not to make unnecessary visits to operational and maintenance buildings which are essential to the smooth running of the railway.
- If colleagues can do their meetings by teleconference, then they should make the most of these facilities.
- Colleagues should be mindful of the potential risks of spreading the virus through physical contact with others – they do not have to shake hands if they don't want to, for example.
- Network Rail advice around international travel should be followed, as set out on the following slides.

[Click here](#) to download advice for critical locations when responding to a potential case of COVID-19 among colleagues.

For further HR information, colleagues should refer to the **COVID-19 HR FAQ** document on MyConnect or contact HR Direct

## Travel advice for all colleagues returning from specified countries

[Click this link to view the current list of specified countries within Category 1 and Category 2, which is updated every day at 14:00 by Public Health England.](#)

- Travellers returning from **category 1 countries** specified by PHE since 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, should immediately self isolate at home, even if not symptomatic, and call NHS 111 – known as NHS 24 in Scotland – to find out what to do next
- Colleagues should inform their line manager by telephone or email as soon as possible to discuss this.
- Travellers from **category 2 countries** specified by PHE since 19<sup>th</sup> February 2020, do not need to immediately self-isolate. However, it is recommended they have a conversation with their line manager and subject to role/location, local consideration be given to whether they should return to work.
- If they develop any symptoms, they should self isolate at home and call NHS 111
- They should inform their line manager by telephone or email as soon as possible to discuss this
- If they have concerns, they should inform their line manager by telephone or email as soon as possible to discuss this.

# Further travel advice for all colleagues

[Click this link to view the current list of specified countries within Category 1 and Category 2, which is updated every day at 14:00 by Public Health England.](#)

- The UK Foreign Office advises to avoid all non-essential travel to China and 'other specified countries' outlined by PHE
- Any planned business travel to China or 'other specified countries' must be approved by a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
- ELT approval is not required for travel within UK
- Colleagues should show a copy of documentation confirming travel to China and/or specified areas for themselves or anyone they may have had close contact with to their line manager.



# Process of escalation for line managers

[Click this link to view the current list of specified countries within Category 1 and Category 2, which is updated every day at 14:00 by Public Health England.](#)

If informed by an employee that they have returned from travelling to Category 1 countries as specified by PHE since 19th February 2020:

1. Inform HR Direct on 0800 0 546 547 to log employee details
2. Advise the employee to remain at home for 14 days and avoid coming to work, to schools or any other public places
3. Should any symptoms present, advise the employee to contact NHS 111 services again – known as NHS 24 in Scotland
4. If no symptoms have presented within 14 days, the employee can return to work as normal.

For any health-related queries or questions, or concerns around the steps to take contact the central occupational health and wellbeing team via [healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk)

## Further line manager advice

If informed by an employee that they have returned from travelling to Category 1 countries as specified by PHE since 19th February 2020 and they are not displaying symptoms:

- and it is feasible to work from home, they can continue to work at home until the 14 days with no symptoms has passed.
- but is in a role which they cannot work from home, they should remain at home and will receive paid leave.

**For further HR information, refer to the COVID-19 HR FAQ document on MyConnect or contact HR Direct.**



## Further information

Network Rail will be carefully monitoring the situation and will update colleagues should more information become available from UK Government.

Network Rail continues to work with multiple stakeholders to ensure contingency plans are in place should the risk increase.

### Contact details:

Occupational Health (Optima) on 0800 083 3324

Anyone who could potentially be affected or who has developed symptoms **must** contact the Network Rail occupational health and wellbeing team via [healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:healthandwellness@networkrail.co.uk)

Colleagues should continue to refer to [MyConnect](#) for the most up-to date information on this topic.



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