

For installer reference only

# Practical safety precautions when installing windows & doors during the COVID-19 pandemic

Helping you work safely in people's homes!

In order to safely install windows and doors into occupied domestic dwellings during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the processes that FENSA Approved Installers have followed for years will now have to change.

These changes are necessary to ensure the safety and protection of your employees, your customers and your families.

For easy reference we've organised the guidance in this document under the following section headers:

- ✓ Materials
- ✓ Travelling to site
- ✓ Communication with the occupant
- ✓ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- ✓ Arriving at site / pre-installation
- ✓ Social distancing & minimising contact
- ✓ Access equipment
- ✓ Refreshment breaks
- ✓ Packing up at the end of the day
- ✓ Disposal of waste products
- ✓ Returning home





## Materials

The removal and replacement of windows and doors requires the use of multiple products ranging from the windows/doors/glass themselves to trims, fixings, sealants, PU foam, cleaning products, blades, drill and driver bits plus hand and power tools.

Consideration should be given to how you obtain, handle, share and store these items.

- ✓ Fabricators should have a safe system in place for their workers, but frames and to a lesser extent glass units can pass through multiple stations, and therefore come into contact with more people during fabrication.

Discussion with the fabricator regarding sanitisation of the product before you receive it with you will help you decide whether or not to accept it.

- ✓ When collecting or delivering a product, consider: is there a product handover method that involves no person-to-person contact?
- ✓ Ancillaries – Visits to trade counters should be minimised. It is advisable to plan in advance (obtain what you will need for as long as possible in advance, reducing trips) or order remotely and have stocks delivered.
- ✓ All products should be sanitised on arrival and recorded as such as part of your goods inwards/collection process.



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**Consider how you obtain, handle, share and store any materials involved in an installation.**  
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## Travelling to site

Travelling to site now provides a challenge for most installation teams as it is near impossible to keep the required 2 metres distance apart when sharing transport.

- ✓ If the installation team are part of the same household (for example a father and son team), travelling together is not an issue.
- ✓ All other teams should where possible travel separately to site.
  - If driving your own car to site, ensure it is insured for commuting to work and unless it is insured for business use do not use it for trips to trade counters etc.
  - Installation managers should try to keep teams as close to their local area as possible.
  - If teams are unable to travel in any other way they should be limited to teams of two, sanitise hands on entry and exit, keep all windows open, wear face coverings and keep journeys as short as possible.
- ✓ Vans should be permanently allocated to an individual and that person made responsible for the vehicle's sanitisation.

Particular attention should be paid to areas/parts of the vehicle that come into contact with hands (grabs, handles, switches, seatbelts and controls).
- ✓ Stops for fuel etc. should be as infrequent as possible and the driver, wherever possible should make use of the “pay at pump” facilities. If these are not available use contactless payment where possible.





## Communication with the occupant

The occupant of the home has a part to play in a smooth and safe installation.

They should be made fully aware during the sales process of what to expect at both survey and installation. This should be followed up by the installation team on the first day of installation.

- ✓ Before arrival contact should be made with the occupant by phone to make some checks and explain the measures and procedures that will be undertaken.
- ✓ The first check should be to ensure that no persons at the property have had symptoms, however mild, in the past 14 days and that there are no persons present that are currently **shielding**. If either are present the job must be postponed.
- ✓ Discuss which rooms will be worked in on each day of the installation and in which order. Ideally the surveyor or installation manager should draw a plan of the property and work with the occupant in advance to plan their movements.
- ✓ Any persons present should be asked to confine themselves to a single room, preferably one where work is not going to take place that day.
- ✓ If the room that occupants are confined to will need to be worked on that day, it should be left until last. Prior to starting work there, the occupants should be moved to a room where work is complete and has been sanitised.
- ✓ The occupants should be asked to leave all internal doors open to rooms where access will be required to enable optimum airflow. It may be prudent to carry door wedges to ensure doors do not slam shut due to increased internal air flow.
- ✓ Ask for all items to be cleared from around windows prior to arrival and clear access be maintained. This an existing standard procedure however it is more important now as it reduces the likelihood of items being touched by installers and therefore the risk of cross contamination.
- ✓ Advise that floor protection will be provided and that appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) will be used when necessary however items in the room such as televisions furniture etc. should be either moved away from the work area or covered by the occupant.
- ✓ Advise your estimated time of arrival and ask that upon arrival access be given and a minimum of 2 metres distance be maintained wherever possible.



For background on **shielding** and who is considered clinically vulnerable, read [this Government guidance document](#).



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

During normal installation work, personal protective equipment (PPE) has always had its place. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PPE requirements have increased and should be used appropriately.

These guidelines cover additional precautions due to COVID-19. Normal PPE such as Hi-Visibility clothing, appropriate footwear etc. should still be used when required.

- ✓ Avoid handling anybody else's PPE wherever possible.
- ✓ **Face coverings** should be worn when close proximity to others is unavoidable such as lifting heavy objects or steadying frames for fixing.

These activities should be completed as quickly as reasonably possible to minimise the risk of exposure. Overuse of face coverings is to be avoided as they will become less effective in containing the virus as they absorb more moisture.
- ✓ Eye protection should also be worn during any unavoidable close proximity work.
- ✓ Gloves worn for viral protection purposes avoid cross contamination only, they do not shield the person from the virus. They should be worn when coming into contact with surfaces that may have been touched by other people. They should be disposed of regularly and securely.
- ✓ Foot coverings should be used if access to an area is not covered by floor protection. To avoid cross contamination of the rest of the property, they should not be worn on both protected and non-protected areas.
- ✓ **Hands should be washed or sanitised regularly.** Washing should be with warm/hot water and soap for at least 20 seconds as per Government guidance. Diagrams issued by various bodies are readily available online and should be printed and issued to each member of installation staff.
- ✓ Appropriate disinfectant or disinfectant wipes should be supplied.
- ✓ **COSHH** must be considered for all cleaning materials provided and appropriate training given in their use.
- ✓ Training must be provided on the use of all PPE to all staff members and this training recorded.

For advice on how to wear and make a **face covering** visit:

[gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-wear-and-make-a-cloth-face-covering)



Review the NHS guidelines on **how to wash your hands**:

[nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/)

“COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health:  
[hse.gov.uk/coshh](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh)”



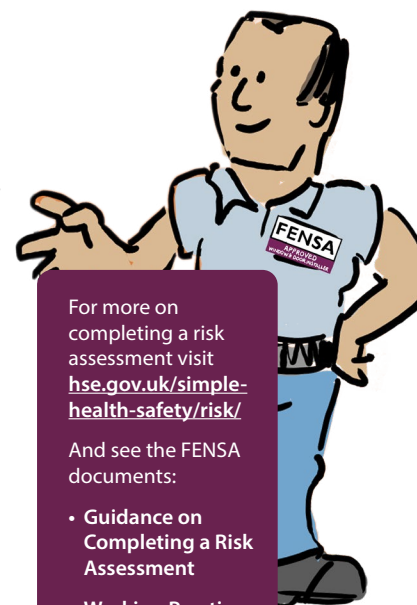
## Arriving at the site / pre-installation

When arriving on site it is imperative that all procedures are followed properly as any failure to adhere to them will result in increased transmission risk.

- ✓ Once at the site instead of knocking on the door or ringing the bell, phone the occupant to signal your arrival.
- ✓ It is advisable to provide the customer a copy of any documentation before you arrive, ideally sent via email or other electronic means.

While still outside the property discuss with the customer the style, colour and design of the items you are to fit that day. Any errors of supply should be identified at this point to ensure minimal time is spent at the property.

- ✓ Areas that the occupant is advised to avoid should be discussed, for example where waste shall be stored during removal and where new products will be stored and prepared. These areas should be carefully considered to ensure people can pass through without coming into close contact with each other.
- ✓ Only one installer should complete the interior pre-installation checks of the property and should wear overshoe footwear protection. The installer should ask the occupant to guide them accordingly while social distancing.
- ✓ A site-specific **risk assessment** should be undertaken. If your company employs less than five people then this risk assessment does not need to be written down, but it is advisable to keep your documentation in event of any repercussions.
- ✓ Any rooms that are out of bounds should be noted by the installer and if possible marked/labelled using materials that will not damage the finish of doors/walls. Any other installers in the team should be briefed on where these rooms are and not to enter them.
- ✓ Once you are satisfied that the products are of correct type, design, size and colour the installation can proceed, lay appropriate floor protection from the access door to all rooms and then to all work areas, secure the protection into place.
- ✓ Floor protection should be either disposable or freshly laundered dust sheets for each new site. Once the protection is in place footwear protection should be removed and either disposed of securely or stored safely for later use in that property only.
- ✓ External areas for waste should be marked out and then cleared at the earliest opportunity.



For more on completing a risk assessment visit [hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/](https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/)

And see the FENSA documents:

- [Guidance on Completing a Risk Assessment](#)
- [Working Practice Risk Assessment](#)





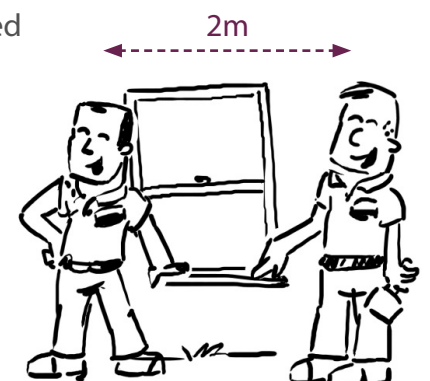
## Social distancing & minimising contact

To ensure that minimal contact is made and social distancing is maintained, a system of work should be adopted where all installers on site complete their tasks accordingly and wherever possible alone.

Many teams have worked to set routines in the past. Building on these established systems will help maintain social distancing and also keeps teams as efficient as possible.

- ✓ One regularly used method sees one installer carefully remove the existing frame and prepare the aperture, followed by the second installer who proceeds to fit the window or door. This method will allow installation team members to be separate as much as possible. Agree what tasks fall to who and try to stick to it.
- ✓ Devices such as airbags as well as secure packing can be used to steady frames during fixing rather than relying on a second person.
- ✓ This could then be followed by one installer finishing internally whilst the other works externally. (only after the window has been glazed).
- ✓ Maintaining airflow through the property for as long as possible is recommended so it may be prudent to resist glazing the frames until as late as possible in the installation process – system and finish dependent.
- ✓ Neither hand nor power tools should be shared if at all possible. Each installer should be responsible for removal and storage of their own kit. If tool sharing is unavoidable then these tools should be sanitised after each use. All tools should be sanitised prior to first use and before being put away at the end of the day.
- ✓ After each person has finished their task in the room, they should sanitise all areas they have come into contact with before handing it over to the next person.
- ✓ When cleaning the room prior to sealing, under no circumstances should the occupant's vacuum cleaner be used.
- ✓ All loose installation waste such as cleaning tissue, used gloves/foot coverings/sealant tubes/trim offcuts/glass labels should be securely bagged ready for disposal.
- ✓ When sealing, the sealant should be tooled in correctly. Under no circumstances should hands come into contact with the mouth nor saliva with the frames or sealant after tooled-in correctly, i.e. with mist spray and finishing tool.

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installers.  
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## Access equipment

It is in the nature of window installation work that access equipment is required a lot of the time, be it hop-up, steps, ladders, towers, scissor lift, cherry picker or full scaffolding.

- ✓ These items will be difficult to sanitise properly so PPE such as gloves should be utilised when using equipment that will be shared by different people or even erected by a separate company.
- ✓ When equipment such as towers, scaffolding or powered access is in use by more than one person at a time it will be difficult to maintain social distancing.

If the time when people are in close proximity is short and controlled, this equipment can be shared with limited risk provided the correct PPE is used.

However if the installation requires this type of access on a longer basis, further risk assessment should be made to determine if other, more robust, respiratory PPE is required or if the installation is actually currently viable.



## Refreshment breaks

When working on a site for any length of time people will naturally need welfare and refreshment breaks.

- ✓ Using the customer's facilities should be avoided however is at the occupant's discretion. If used then wipe down surfaces after use, wash hands thoroughly and use either a separate towel or paper towels and dispose.

Other options could be:

- If local, returning home or to the office.
- If the installation is ongoing for a longer period having a Portaloos or similar delivered to site.
- Creating a facility in the work vehicle such as a portable toilet
- Using public facilities, where available
- ✓ In all cases, thorough hand cleaning is required after each use and the toilet facilities should be left clean and sanitised after every use.
- ✓ Refreshment breaks such as tea breaks should be taken either outside or in a vehicle. If weather is inclement and social distancing cannot be maintained in the vehicle, staggering break times would allow for safe use.







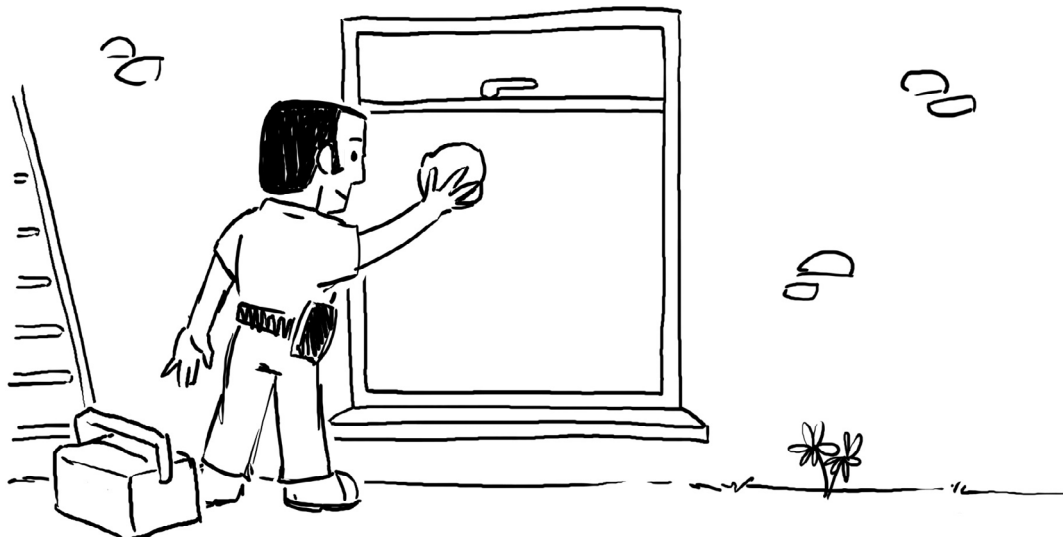
## Packing up at the end of the day

Once the day's installation is complete most of us just want to pack up and be home as soon as possible.

During these times we must be more careful than usual and ensure we exit the property in the same methodical way we arrived.

- ✓ Remove all tools from the property and sanitise before storage (including toolboxes, in particular handles).
- ✓ Securely store any items that are to be left overnight.
- ✓ Sanitise all areas that you have come into contact with, taking care not to disturb sealant lines etc.
- ✓ Lift floor protection, working back towards to the room door. Leave hallway/stair protection until last.
- ✓ Put on overshoe protection and vacuum each room and hallway, removing any room labels and door stops as you go.
- ✓ Speak to the occupant and explain what you have done, areas to avoid, how you have stored products/tools etc.
- ✓ If possible, rather than demonstrating yourself direct the occupier to video presentations on how to operate the locking systems as well as how to carry out general maintenance.
- ✓ Sanitise any keys and hand over by leaving either on a table or in the door/window.
- ✓ Although it's a hard habit to break, do not shake hands with the customer before you leave.
- ✓ Wash or sanitise hands after you leave the property and before you enter your vehicle.

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## Disposal of waste products

Waste products such as old frames and glass could be contaminated for some time after removal (estimated to be up to 5 days). Care should be taken when handling these even when away from the property.

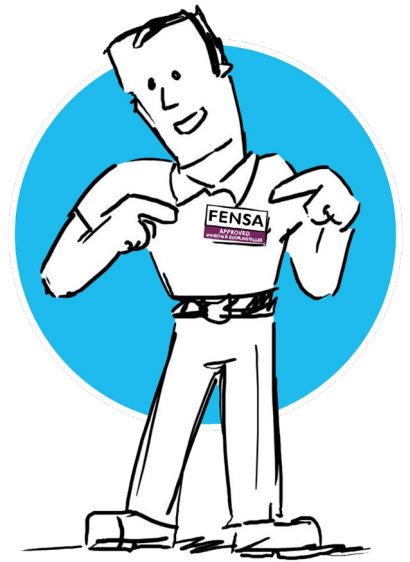
- ✓ Use gloves to handle all waste from the vehicle to wherever it is disposed of or stored.
- ✓ Recycling should be undertaken whenever possible and those companies that take charge of this waste should have their own procedures for transfer and acceptance. Ensure that you are aware of their procedures in advance.
- ✓ Loose waste, particularly those items that have been used to sanitise, clean, or that have come into contact with people during the installation, should be securely bagged before disposal to minimise risk to refuse workers.



## Returning home

When returning home from work there is a risk that the virus could be unwittingly carried upon the person.

- ✓ Leave boots in a porch or outside. If this is not possible, disinfect them and leave as close to the main door as practical.
- ✓ While still outside your home, if possible remove all outer layer clothing and immediately launder.
- ✓ Shower or bathe as soon as possible. Avoid contact with others until you showered/bathed.



Installer portal: [fensaonline.com](https://fensaonline.com)  
Phone: 020 7645 3700  
Email: [enquiries@fensa.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@fensa.org.uk)

The practical advice in this document is based on the current UK Government guidance.

We advise you consider the precautions above to help ensure you, your employees, your families and your customers stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Always review the latest Government guidance, which can be found at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)