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Guidance

COVID-19 guidance for telecommunications infrastructure deployment in England

Guidance for providers of telecommunications infrastructure in England during the COVID-19 outbreak.

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Government recognises the ongoing importance of the telecommunications industry at this critical time.

Now, more than ever, the country is reliant on fixed line and mobile communications networks. Telecommunications has therefore been included as one of the critical sectors in new government regulations and legislation in response to dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak.

What the regulations mean

Work to repair and maintain the telecommunications network must be allowed to continue at the current time. Gatherings of more than two people are permitted where this is essential for work purposes.

Guidance for Local Authorities and landowners

Local authorities should note the following aspects of how they can continue to work with the telecommunications industry.

Emergency access provision

Where emergency access rights to property have been agreed between the landowner and the telecommunications operator, it remains crucial that they remain able to be relied upon.

Fully operational telecommunications infrastructure is needed to support mass homeworking and critical connectivity to emergency services and hospitals. Network operators must be able to [rectify network outages promptly](#) and to mitigate any effects of network degradation over the duration of this emergency period.

Agreements between landlords and telecommunications network providers

Maintaining the integrity of our communications networks is of paramount importance to sustain the increasing demands being placed on them.

Landowners and occupiers of land who have entered into agreements with providers of telecommunications networks should continue to meet their obligations under those agreements.

This particularly applies to any contractual obligations to provide access to sites to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair or upgrade electronic communications equipment.

It is vital that such access is provided for emergency repairs, routine maintenance and critical upgrades, under existing contractual arrangements.

For unoccupied properties, landowners should consider putting in place steps to help facilitate the access by operators.

Streetworks

The Highways Authorities and Utilities Committee (England) has published a [joint statement](#) with the government, the Joint Authorities Group and Streetworks UK, advising practitioners on operating responsibly to help control the spread of COVID-19.

Works involving network maintenance and fault repairs, customer repairs, network build, and increasing network capacity should be allowed to continue. Workers must follow the guidance about taking precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Public health considerations

Where telecoms workers and operators need to enter residential properties, they and residents should follow the guidance on:

- [Social distancing](#)
- [Going to work](#)
- [Carrying out work in people's homes](#)

Read [further guidance on COVID-19 and what you need to do](#).

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