

# PROTECTING UNOCCUPIED PREMISES DURING THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

A guide for property owners & occupiers





# INTRODUCTION

The Government has from 5 November 2020 ordered an extensive list\* of different kinds of businesses and venues in the UK to close due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pubs, restaurants, non-essential retail, cinemas, leisure facilities and more have all been forced to close their doors. As a result, a large number of commercial premises have been rapidly mothballed because of Covid-19.

This guide offers a checklist of **considerations** & **recommendations** for property owners and occupiers to follow at this time. This list should be read in the context of Government guidelines around restrictions in movement and social distancing.

Not endangering the health of others or the ability of our healthcare system to respond should be everyone's first priority at this time. Under current emergency Regulations, nobody may leave their home "without reasonable excuse", which includes "travelling to work or to carry out voluntary services, where it's not possible to do these from home." When outside your home, you "should keep a safe distance of 2m or more from anyone who is not a member of your household."

\*Further information on the new restrictions can be found;

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#staying-safe-outside-the-home-social-distancing>

# IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



- Are there any contents or stock of an attractive nature or high value, which could be removed from the premises or additionally secured?
- Can the equipment be removed from site to a more secure location (this should be cleared with your insurance intermediary)?
- Can the equipment be locked in a secure cupboard or a more secure room?
- Do you still have powered up computers/servers to allow staff to work remotely?
- Have you thought about good housekeeping measures, such as the presence of combustible content around operative computers & equipment?
- Is it possible for heating to be maintained on a frost stat or water pipes drained down and isolated (unless supplying water for sprinklers or other firefighting systems)?
- Were waste bins and skips emptied prior to mothballing? If not, can this be done now?
- Where combustible waste and pallets cannot be removed from site can they be moved away from the building, ideally up to 10 metres from the perimeter of the property?
- Are keyholding details for intruder alarms up to date? Are these being updated if those attending fall ill or are otherwise incapacitated?
- Is it possible to regularly inspect the premises in line with current Government guidance, with any damage found rectified? Safety aspects around lone working should be considered and if possible, arrangements put in place for other staff members to step up to this in case of incapacity.
- Can you contact 'essential' neighbouring premises where people are still working to share your details and ask them to get in touch should there be any issues arise?

# IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS



- Unplug and isolate non-essential electrical equipment (including forklift truck charging units) for the duration of the lockdown
- Heating should be maintained at 4C or above where wet sprinkler systems or other water-based fire suppression systems are installed
- Isolate any non-essential building services
- Electrical equipment should be turned off and unplugged, and electrical systems isolated at the main fuse board, with the exception of critical business infrastructure required to allow continued operations and support temporary home working arrangements. Critical equipment includes electronic security protections used to protect your property
- Waste / pallets / combustibles away from building – 10 metre where practicable
- Close internal doors, especially fire doors
- Security measure fully used:
  - Intruder alarms set – check to ensure detectors are not obscured CCTV cameras not obscured and working effectively
  - Doors and windows locked
  - Shutters locked in place
  - Security lighting fully operative
  - Fences in good condition
  - Gates locked shut
- Report any evidence of attempted entry, damage, etc. to Police

If you would like to discuss any of the points above or require assistance with general/commercial insurance, please don't hesitate to contact me for further information.