International Federation of Consulting Engineers
The Global Voice of Consulting Engineers

FIDIC COVID-19: On-site working and project team organisation

Guidance Memorandum

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About FIDIC

FIDIC, the International Federation of Consulting Engineers, is the global representative body for national associations of consulting engineers and represents over one million engineering professionals and 40,000 firms in more than 100 countries worldwide.

Founded in 1913, FIDIC is charged with promoting and implementing the consulting engineering industry's strategic goals on behalf of its member associations and to disseminate information and resources of interest to its members. Today, FIDIC membership covers over 100 countries of the world.

FIDIC, in the furtherance of its goals, publishes international standard forms of contracts for works and for clients, consultants, sub-consultants, joint ventures and representatives, together with related materials such as standard pre-qualification forms.

FIDIC also publishes business practice documents such as policy statements, position papers, guidelines, training manuals and training resource kits in the areas of management systems (quality management, risk management, business integrity management, environment management, sustainability) and business processes (consultant selection, quality based selection, tendering, procurement, insurance, liability, technology transfer, capacity building).

FIDIC organises the annual FIDIC International Infrastructure Conference and an extensive programme of seminars, capacity building workshops and training courses.

FIDIC priorities
- Leading the consultancy and engineering industry visibly and effectively
- Strengthen FIDIC's position in the overall construction industry
- Connect and support for our members more effectively
- Adopt and improve the governance of the federation
- Innovate the way the secretariat operates to be more effective and efficient.

Purpose

This FIDIC Guidance Memorandum has been developed by members of the FIDIC Risk, Liability and Quality Committee, based on their experiences and the business conditions in their home countries.

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive checklist but a review list that will allow FIDIC member associations' member firms to consider as many facets of the current pandemic situation as may apply to their organisation, and particularly to their staff.

On-site working and project team organisation - Risks and Measures during and after COVID-19

An identified general risk is that personnel are not fully aware of the risks that exist and so can inadvertently expose themselves to disease and that there may be unanticipated consequences from that exposure that reflect into your organisation.

We suggest you use this as a thought generation foundation to develop a relevant risk register for your own organisation.

Remember our people are our most valuable asset and the hardest one to replace.

Loss of communication channels

a) Risks
- Network failure or overload
- Overwhelmed email inbox
- Failure of communication chain from client and key stakeholders advising of on-site risks
- Lack of access to training material and reference documents
- Loss of key personnel from chain of command or delegated authorities through sickness, quarantine or death or caring for children staying at home because of closed schools/kindergartens/nursery
- Unclear or disrupted authorities and communications structure
- Unclear or disrupted procedure for approval and signatures
- Late arrival of correspondence of permissions required (physically and/or electronically)
- Lack of awareness session for how to use the virtual communication taking into consideration the confidentiality issues
- Pressure on buying laptops
- Lack of availability of infrastructure (Laptops, software, communications program, etc.)

b) Measures

- Form backup networks for communication including chain of communication or communication trees using the personnel's own phones/data where each person passes on received messages to two other assigned personnel for quick spread of information where other means are not operating.
- Establish the procedure for reimbursement of personal costs
- Acquire an application for on-line group meetings/ conference
- Acquire/ensure the cyber protection for online applications (Note Zoom is not currently fully secure - April 2020)
- Offer tech support and train the personnel in using the application (applicable to office devices and personal devices used for home-office)
- Flexibility in using personal devices on company networks in case of lack of work devices
- Form backup chains of communication and/or command
- Send continuous notices to the Employer, Sub-Contractors, suppliers, etc and ask for read receipts to ensure networks are functioning.
- Keep accurate backed up or manual records and follow the contractual procedure for additional costs
- Consider advantages and disadvantages of cloud storage and web base email

- Confidentiality agreements with clients and employees will still apply even when working from home. Remind employees of obligations.
- Provide 24/7 online technical support to help the employees overcome the technical issues and FAQ
- Use more online meetings to overcome the need for travel and face to face exposure.
  - Preserve bandwidth by turning cameras off after introduction to meeting
- Update the company`s ISO Quality Management system (clause 5 and 6: Planning, actions to address risk and opportunities)
- Consider virtual reality systems for testing and inspections.

Over delivery or inclusion of non-essential tasks

a) **Risks**

- Attendance at site where not necessary
- Entering high risk areas to obtain non-critical information
- Carrying out work which the client has designated as non-essential and delayed
- Collecting a sample or component without appreciating the risk associated with potential contamination of that sample, component or personnel involved in sample collection
- Failure to observe precautions put in place by client organisations or imposed by the applicable law for PPE.

b) **Measures**

- Briefing personnel on these issues.

Problems with PPE and/or specific equipment

a) Risks

- Lack of adequate PPE equipment due to stock shortage / Not enough PPE in stock to satisfy the demand in the supply chain.
- Excessive response time for the provision of minimum required PPE to operate on site as per applicable regulations
- Failing to realise that construction PPE / specific equipment may not be adequate for site visits
- Failure to use appropriate PPE; gloves, eye protection, masks, and disposable overalls may be necessary in some areas
- Entering areas with substandard PPE / specific equipment relative to requirements
- Failure to take action on experiencing failure of a PPE component / specific equipment, for example a torn glove or broken mask
- Failure to provide PPE to external contractors / subcontractors or suppliers if they do not arrive on site with the required equipment
- Failure of proper waste management and disposal for PPE
- Increasing the pressure on the medical sector workers (Masks and gloves- a clear policy that the medical front line workers is the priority need. Do not waste PPE.

b) **Measures**

- Establish an offsite process and facility to store and issue PPE if your office is closed
- Identify/control the stock of PPE and any relevant special medical equipment necessary in short/medium/long period

- Signage on site with the PPE required for internal and external visitors updated with the current situation
- Understand the quality standard of PPE purchased and any limits to its performance.
- Regular health tests for site workers (routine temperature checks)
- Identify and take measures against an eventual shortage of the specific medical equipment required by the authorities
- Ensure enough reserves of PPE and specific equipment in the quantity& quality necessary and are accessible if your office or supplier is locked down.
- Use ISO 45001 – occupational health and safety - as a basic structure for procedures
- Consider WHO procedures and instructions in addition to local guidance.

Contact with contaminated persons:

a) Risks

- Failure to maintain minimum separation (Social Distancing)
- Lack of contact information for contact tracing
- Failure to provide procedures to access emergency medical advice and response
- Spread of the disease widely in your personnel
- Loss the workforce due to (Sickness, quarantine, Death: Loss of Know How or competence).

b) Measures

- Establish a protocol for verifying the personnel when coming to the site or starting work shift; observe the applicable law/regulations; limit non-essential access to site
- Set restrictions of movement on the site for personnel and visitors
- Establish the protocol/action required when recognising symptoms in another person
- Keep a diary of those you meet or interact with (Name, date, time, and location if possible)
- Prearrange or plan for an emergency response / medical team that can react in case of emergencies on site
- Wear appropriate PPE at all times
- Video record for site and offices can provide records of visitors for contact tracing
- Health tests and checks (Know the symptoms and do temperature checks on yourself)
- Apply social distancing on all types of works
- Have a succession plan in case you lose a critical person in the team.

Direct and indirect contact

a) Risks

- Tools, instruments, plants, vehicles, door handles, tables, handrails, input keyboards, telephones, lift buttons, public transport, touchscreens are all places where there is extensive common and frequent contact, with possible infrequent cleaning
- Rendering first aid assistance that involves direct contact with an infected person. (Mouth to mouth resuscitation is dangerous)
- Limitations imposed on key activities such as plant commissioning by direct contact or difficulties in maintaining personal separation distances.

b) Measures

- Establish a protocol for periodic disinfection of risk surfaces, tools, equipment, plants, vehicles, etc

- Establish a <u>one user protocol</u> for using tools, equipment, plants, vehicles, mobile phones, keyboards. No hot desking.
- Establish enough easily accessible points and provide hand disinfectants for the personnel
- Establish enough easily accessible points for disposing of contaminated equipment or used PPE
- Update and train the health and safety officer and/or security personnel about the supplementary site regulations
- Instruct the personnel regarding the supplementary/new regulations
- Clear tracing policy and procedure that can be put in place immediately it is known a contact has taken place.
- Review sanitisation requirements against sensitivity of equipment to chemicals.

Personnel transport/ office housing

a) Risks

- Risks Restrictions and risks regarding the public or private/company transport to and from the site
- Sanitary restrictions/measures for preparing/serving/eating meals on the site where there is a risk of transmission because of congested facilities
- Personnel shortage from critical areas due to transport difficulties
- Shifts pattern disrupted or changed due to transport issues
- Failure of office infrastructure or loss of IT support team.

b) Measures

- Consider splitting teams in half to limit exposure to critical personnel resources (Minimum staffing plan)
- Establish protocol and apply remote working where applicable or possible
- Insurance coverage for company assets while in personnel possession and out of the office
- Split lunch time in shifts to minimize the concentration of personnel in designated lunch areas
- Provide food for staff in packages and based on H&S requirements. (Be aware of allergies)
- Review teams for members with critical institutional knowledge of sites or business.
- Review teams for critical equipment operational skills required on sites
- Consider local storage of critical information particularly if it is dependent on the network for recovery
- Identify critical contact points within your organisation that could be disrupted by disease or isolation
- Certification processes you are responsible for which cannot take place due to access restrictions
- Check back-up copies are being taken
- Use of other persons or organisations equipment
- Always perform sanitation verification of equipment prior to use
- Avoid use of another person's PPE unless the situation is life-threatening.

Site inductions and hazard identification

- Check for hazards with client's department or area manager before visits
- Read hazard boards at every visit as things are changing day by day

- Ask security personnel or site contact to inform of any special hazards or procedures if necessary and enforce use of PPE as required.
- Sign in and sign out.
- If on site, establish frequent contact with supervisor / area manager
- Record any close contacts on your site report (15-minute face to face meetings at less than 2 metres separation or any physical contacts raise your risk level of transmission)
- Awareness and training in social distancing.

Personal Hygiene / Equipment cleaning (Tidying up)

- Practice how to take gloves off without touching the outside surface
- Take off disposable protection as soon as you leave a restricted area, it is carrying the contaminants and you do not want to spread them further
- Clean/sanitise boot soles if you did not wear disposable bootees
- Sanitise the steering wheel and vehicle keys of the car you have driven when you get home/office
- Wash hands in warm water with soap for at least 20 seconds before returning to normal activities
- Dispose of gloves/disposables in a bin as soon as possible or put in a paper or plastic bag for future disposal, preferably out of closed areas.

Emergency attendance and response at site

Contractor

- Make sure that the entry point and evacuation route is established
- Ensure the H&S officer is identified

Personnel

- Always carry your own PPE regardless
- Encourage remote work as much as possible

Important things to remember

- COVID-19 virus can travel in aerosols for some distance and remains viable on surfaces for hours
- COVID-19 is present in sewerage and faeces of infected people. Be extra careful around sewerage.
- Take all normal precautions and extra care as per the related authorities' announcements and declarations
- Take the basics for post visit sanitation with you (soap and water, clean towel, alcohol gel) and clean up as soon as you are out of any risk area. You can sanitise the outside of your gloves to prevent carrying the virus out of the area while maintaining hand protection
- Remember to sanitise steering wheel, gear change, keys and door handles of vehicle when you get home.

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