

CPNI

Centre for the Protection
of National Infrastructure

Staying Secure during COVID-19

9 April 2020

The impact of COVID-19 on your businesses is profound and far-reaching. We understand that you will have concerns ranging from guard force resilience, employee screening and access to critical locations. You might have to adopt a different risk appetite in the immediate crisis, but that will leave vulnerabilities.

Alongside this, there is an enduring threat to your organisations' security from sophisticated hostile intelligence actors through to low level criminal actors. It continues to be unlikely that COVID-19 will increase the threat from terrorism within the UK, although the threat level remains at SUBSTANTIAL.

This pamphlet highlights measures that you can take to foster effective personnel, people and physical security practices during this pandemic. It also outlines support that we can provide you.

Security during a pandemic

We have issued high level guidance on good personnel security practices during a [pandemic](#) where usual security practices are either suspended or changed to reflect different working patterns, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Where security staff resource is limited, consider deploying it across roles in a manner that has greatest impact in terms of reducing risk. To do this, take a strategic view of security risks and priorities. This should include understanding how particular risks – and hence demand for security measures – can be reduced, and where it may be appropriate to accept greater security risk to reduce security effort and/or risk to personnel from exposure to COVID-19.

Ways of reducing security risk that could be considered may include the following:



limiting the number of operational entrances, exits and/or hours of operation;



securing and preventing access to non-essential areas;



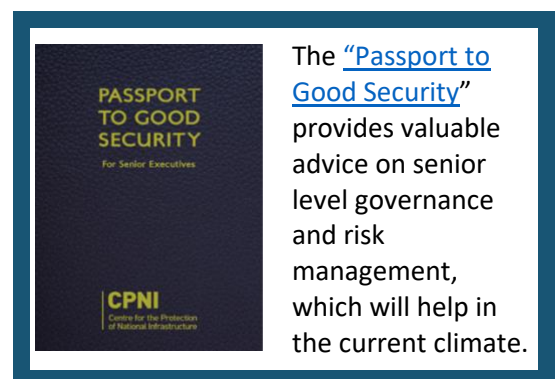
not accepting non-essential and/or unexpected deliveries;



procuring only from key trusted suppliers;



minimising vehicle movements onto sites (e.g. encouraging personnel to park outside or deliveries to be dropped off at the site perimeter).



Secure Your People

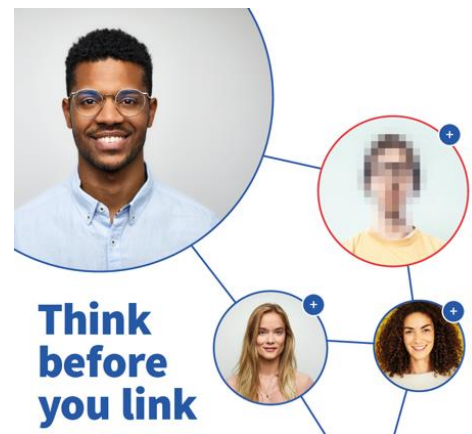
Most organisations will have large numbers of employees working from home, introducing additional risk. Encouraging your employees to think and act in a security-conscious way and to take personal responsibility for their actions is critical at this time of working differently and can help prevent incidents and breaches from happening.

During COVID-19, poor employment screening processes for employees and contractors could enable a deliberate insider who recognises the value in being able to legitimately access sensitive information and equipment. A strong security culture will provide a deterrence to insider activity by ensuring the workforce have a good level of security awareness, so are less likely to become unwitting insiders and understand how to report concerns where they notice workplace behaviour of concern– see [Insider Threats in a Pandemic](#) guidance.

Criminals and hostile actors may act anonymously or duplicitously online in an attempt to connect with people who have access to valuable and sensitive information. CPNI has just released [Think Before You Link](#) which provides advice and guidance on the security risks of putting too much information about your employment on social media.

One of the threats that has emerged during the pandemic so far is the use of sophisticated online phishing techniques by hostile actors to exploit concerns about COVID-19. The joint NCSC and CPNI guidance [Phishing Attacks: Defending your organisation](#) provides advice on how organisations can defend themselves against malicious emails and cyber criminals.

NCSC have also produced [Working From Home guidance](#) which provides advice and guidance around the challenges of an increase in home working. For further cyber security advice, please visit their website at www.ncsc.gov.uk.



Other guidance which will help you secure your people:

 Small Actions, Big Consequences	 Exit Procedures
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Secure Your Assets

Other relevant guidance to assist with securing your assets:

 Security in the Supply Chain	 Protecting My Asset
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A wealth of information is available on our website regarding the assessment of threat and risk, and selection and effective implementation of appropriate physical security measures for protecting sites, buildings and assets, permanently or temporarily.

Security should always be considered as a system, with due consideration given to how individual security measures are selected, integrated together, and operated by suitably trained, motivated and experienced personnel, to achieve the intended security outcome.

The [Catalogue of Security Equipment](#) helps you identify appropriate physical security equipment. In most cases, however, now may not be an appropriate time to be making

major adjustments to, or purchases of, physical security measures. Instead, consideration should be given to how existing measures can best be adapted to meet current security priorities. Please visit the [CPNI website](#) for latest updates.

If you have any questions or feedback on how to secure your people and assets during these unprecedented times, please get in touch through the CPNI website <https://www.cpni.gov.uk/contact>. Also refer to other [Government guidance for employees and businesses on COVID-19](#).