



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

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Dr Peter Fitzsimons  
Technical Manager  
Property Care Association

Our ref: PO2020/07507/MK

8 April 2020

Dear Dr Fitzsimons,

Thank you for your email of 24 March, enclosing a letter from a number of associations to the Secretary of State, about the need for weed and pest control operations to be designated as 'essential work' during the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) emergency measures.

The current COVID-19 outbreak, which began in December 2019, presents a significant challenge for the entire world. The Government acknowledges the importance of the issues raised in the enclosed letter, as well as the importance of the represented industries.

Not all species control situations are the same. In some cases, there may be a real danger to people's health and safety, in which case we expect companies and individual workers to act responsibly, doing only what is essential and following Government advice about prevention of COVID-19 transmission. In other cases, the work cannot be classed as essential and will have to be paused.

The Government's advice, with regards to your situation, is that tradespeople, carrying out maintenance on people's property, can continue to work, providing they are well, have no symptoms and ensure that Public Health England guidelines, including maintaining a 2 metre distance from any household occupants, are followed to ensure everyone's safety.

No work should be carried out in any household which is isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless the work is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household and where the tradesperson is willing to do so. In such cases, Public Health England can provide advice. No work should be carried out by a tradesperson who has coronavirus symptoms, however mild. Companies and individual workers should keep up to date with the latest guidance issued by the Government as it is subject to regular change.

Further information on the measures everyone should take can be found on GOV.UK:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

I hope this information is helpful in these difficult times.

*Yours sincerely,  
John Gardiner*