



A Safety Assessment Federation (SAFed) Member Brief on the Continued Operation of the Thorough Examination Sector in Response to COVID-19 and their Designation as Essential Service Providers

Prepared with Current Government Guidance and Information Provided from the Health & Safety Authority (HSA)

The Engineer Surveyors of the SAFed Member Companies provide statutory examinations and inspection services to national legislation standards, to ensure the safety of machinery, plant and equipment, and the health and welfare of operatives, personnel and the public.

The guidance for essential service providers is available on the link below, and SAFed Members fit the category of 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities' within this guidance.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dfeb8f-list-of-essential-service-providers-under-new-public-health-guidelin/>

In addition, the HSA have issued the statement below to SAFed, included on their website within FAQs.

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/news_events_media/news/news_and_articles/covid-19_additional_hsa_faqs.html



Advice on statutory testing –

27.03.2020

Several pieces of legislation enforced by the Health and Safety Authority contain provisions that require examinations and testing to be undertaken by competent persons at predefined statutory intervals. Such legislation includes the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (S.I. No. 299 of 2007) in respect to lifts and lifting equipment and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 (S.I. No. 445 of 2012), in respect to pressure systems. The continued safe operation of such equipment depends, in a large part, on the continued safety of the equipment and accessories involved. Failures in this type of equipment can have significant or even fatal consequences for workers and members of the public. Duty-holders have a legal responsibility to maintain work equipment in a condition that is safe and to ensure that any required statutory inspections, examinations or testing is undertaken as required.

There is currently no derogation in respect of the provisions of the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005 or its associated statutory provisions at the present time. However, the Authority recognises that employers, as a result of national measures to prevent the spread of COVID 19, may in certain circumstances, find it challenging to source the necessary competence to undertake such examinations. Notwithstanding any such difficulties, employers are reminded of their general duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the safety health and welfare at work of their employees and that of others who may be present at the place of work. Additionally, employers must continue to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the design, provision and maintenance of plant and machinery so that it is safe and without risk to health. Should duty-holders have any concern about the continued safe operation or use of such plant or equipment, it should be removed from service until such concerns have been appropriately addressed.

In the event that engineering companies are suffering shortages in their resources, which may inhibit their ability to undertake such statutory examinations, consideration should be given to focusing available resources on equipment present at essential locations or which is critical to the operation of infrastructure and supply chains essential to the national interest at this critical time.

Employers are advised to follow the latest public health advice and to identify and implement suitable control measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection in the workplace. These measures should be communicated to all relevant employees and others at the place of work. Competent persons who are working on site where there are restrictions arising from the risk of COVID-19 should comply with site rules and also take into account public health advice around preventing the spread of COVID-19. Public health advice is available on the Department of Health, HSE and Health Protection Surveillance Centre websites.

During inspections, the Authority will take into consideration all matters of fact when deciding the appropriate level of action to take where any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions are observed.

Based on the information above, as examinations and inspections are still to be completed (i.e. no derogation) and that they are conducted at client premises, 'the place of work', it is necessary for the Engineer Surveyor to travel to and from that place of work to provide the Essential Service.



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Assess Ireland
Aviva Insurance Limited
Axiom Engineering Associates Limited
British Engineering Services
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Engineering Safety Inspection Services
ERNE Lifting Services
Gammex Independent Inspection Services Ltd
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HSB Engineering Insurance Services Ltd
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Minton, Treharne & Davies Ltd
PHS Compliance Ltd
Safety Check Engineering Ltd
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Safety Welding & Lifting (International) Limited
SGS UK Ltd, Industrial Division
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