

Government Indemnity Scheme Update

31 March 2020

Closed Venues and Sites – advice on meeting security and environmental conditions for GIS and general collections purposes

This update is to provide advice to organisations with loans under Government Indemnity following the announcement by the UK Prime Minister and others in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland of a ‘Shutdown’ where venues must close and travel to work is only permitted if it is ‘essential’. Other organisations without loans under GIS may also find the advice of more general help.

On the question of whether in-house employees can continue to attend their usual place of work for the purpose of ensuring the security of premises and appropriate protection and conservation of cultural objects stored in them, the Home Office, through DCMS, have confirmed that people can travel for work purposes and attend their place of work, but should only do so where that work cannot be carried out from home.

This would therefore permit people whose attendance is necessary to provide security or to ensure the preservation of cultural objects to travel to their place of work. When travelling and at work, people should always try to observe the 2 metres distance rule.

The Conditions of Government Indemnity do allow flexibility by agreement but in current circumstances we have agreed a general operational approach for maintaining the security and safety of buildings, contents and objects as follows:

Advice from National Security Adviser (NSA) and GIS Environmental Adviser:

1. Buildings should maintain a minimum staffing where possible to ensure alarms and the environment are monitored and maintained as necessary.
2. Where buildings and open sites do not have the benefit of staff on site, the buildings should have alarm systems, possibly CCTV and environmental monitoring systems. These should be transmitted to be received by nominated people who can act should an issue arise. Where possible random checks of the exterior of buildings or open sites are recommended.
3. Where possible, every building (other than that at 1. above) containing Indemnified objects should be visited at least once in each seven-day period to check systems and refresh environmental measures.
4. Where it is not possible to meet the requirements of 3. during the shutdown period, checks should be made as frequently as possible.
5. It is important that records of checks and visits by who, when and where are made and any action required/ taken to ensure the wellbeing and security of objects. Where it has not been possible to visit a site due to current restrictions, this should also be recorded. These may be required in the event of any later claim.