



12 January 2021

The following statement is issued in response to queries from concerned members of the public who want to understand more about our COVID secure measures we have in place to minimise the risk of infection for our collection crews.

Hills closely follows the guidance from Government, Public Health England, the NHS and the Waste Industry Safety and Health (WISH) Forum and has done so since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic.

This guidance has been regularly reviewed and continues to state that good hygiene is the most important control in preventing the spread of COVID-19, combined with cleaning hard surfaces in vehicles regularly.

Our crews are encouraged to wash their hands regularly, not touch their eyes, nose or mouth and, where possible, keep the cab ventilated by opening the windows on both sides of the vehicle by at least 10 centimetres.

If any employee has symptoms of COVID-19 (or if someone in their household has symptoms) they are told not to come to work and to arrange to take a COVID-19 test and follow government procedures.

The WISH guidance recognises that for large rural counties such as Wiltshire, it is not possible to restrict crew sizes without having a significant impact on waste and recycling collections. The crews also work in small 'bubbles' wherever possible and follow social distancing guidelines at all times whilst at the depot.

By strictly following this guidance and practice, the frontline waste and recycling collections have been able to continue to operate.

Should waste and recycling collection staff wear face coverings while they work?

Crews members are allowed to wear a face covering should they choose to do so, and are provided with face coverings and advice on how to use them safely.

However, WISH guidance advises that face coverings are not currently required to be worn during waste and recycling collection activities. This is because there may be additional risks when undertaking manual work as the face coverings may need to be regularly adjusted and changed by placing hands close to the eyes, nose and mouth. Additionally, face coverings may become moist and trap contaminants which could be then be transmitted to the wearer due to the prolonged time they would be worn during collection activities.