

The board of directors have been working closely with senior management, reviewing the rules of membership, exploring new system ideas and most essentially, continuing to monitor and follow the advice coming out of government and Public Health England.

As a Country, we are entering into unknown territory. Each day is going to bring different challenges to both personal and business life. The industry is going to have some difficult times ahead, from training / projects being cancelled to shortage of supplies, inevitably meaning works cannot be carried out.

First and foremost, as a membership Association, we want to support our members as much as we possibly can. We appreciate that there needs to be an element of flexibility around our rules and standards, without affecting the high quality of training standards we are recognised for.

The board of directors and senior management have therefore developed an interim policy which deals with several key areas of our operations:

## **CORONAVIRUS – UKATA INTERIM POLICY FOR MEMBERS**

### **1. Communications**

Whilst the UKATA office remains open at the moment, we are aware that current advice recommends self-isolating, working from home and no non-essential travel.

UKATA is well equipped for staff members to work from home and in that event, phones will be diverted to a central point of contact. All emails will still be managed and therefore we would ask that you continue to contact us via the usual methods of communication, telephone and email.

At this stage we do not envisage any disruption to our usual methods of communication.

### **2. Training**

The board of directors have given serious consideration to methods of training delivery and have agreed the following as an interim measure:

Training for the following courses may be delivered by video conference, using appropriate software such as Skype, Microsoft Teams etc.

- Asbestos Awareness
- Asbestos Awareness Refresher
- Duty to Manage – Extension to Asbestos Awareness
- Non-Licensable Refresher (Delegates must complete a TNA prior to the training)

In order to quality control and maintain our high standards of training, the following safeguarding measures are required to be in place:

- The member must outline their plan for video conference training and provide this in writing to the UKATA office;
- The member must only utilise approved tutors in accordance with the rules of membership;
- The member must adhere to the appropriate syllabus, particularly maintaining course timings;
- The member must evidence the delegates sitting the course, screenshots throughout the course would be sufficient evidence;
- To ensure consistency with undertaking the final exam across the membership, UKATA are currently developing an online examination system. Without exception, members must provide delegates with a link and password (provided by UKATA) which will allow the delegates to undertake the end of course exam:
  - The exam will be compliant with the current syllabi, questions will be randomised from the UKATA Question Bank and the exam will be timed accordingly;
  - The exam results will be reported back (live) to the primary contact, at which point the member may then generate a certificate of training on the Certificate Generator.
- To assess quality and in order to conduct random quality checks, the member must invite UKATA via email ([info@ukata.org.uk](mailto:info@ukata.org.uk)) to each training session delivered by video conference, enabling the office to log in to assess compliance and quality at any time.

The board of directors will continue to review this interim policy on a regular basis and once withdrawn, training delivered by video conference must cease with immediate effect. This interim policy has been agreed as an exception and does not set a precedent for future training delivery.

### 3. Membership

The board of directors are aware that membership process deadlines are approaching for some members and it may be difficult, given the circumstances, to comply with the timescales outlined within the rules of membership. Furthermore, we understand that a high number of training courses are being cancelled by clients and this will affect upcoming audits.

To support members, the board of directors have agreed to relax the rules of membership and postpone all upcoming audits with immediate effect. Furthermore, an initial extension period of three months will be granted to members whose membership process deadlines are approaching.

We will continue to monitor this policy and may extend the timescales outlined above dependent on the situation and guidance available over the coming weeks and months.

We have also written to HSE to seek clarification and guidance on two key issues we foresee, relevant to Licensable and Non-Licensable works with asbestos:

**Q:** Will there be a grace period for training certificates that are due to expire soon and where workers may not be able to get to a training course to refresh their training. Also, will workers be permitted to work with ACM's without an in-date certificate of training?

**HSE Response:** The asbestos regs specifically require competence and describe training as a way towards that. If a worker is competent, they can work. If what is sought is an updating course that has been identified through TNA/company planned training then evidence of that planning (booking/letter /invoice / "letter of comfort") is a reasonable approach to show that is going to happen in a reasonable timeframe. Obviously if a worker has shown by poor work standards that he needs a course or has never been trained - then they shouldn't be working with asbestos in any case.

**Q:** Will there be a grace period for asbestos medicals as they are non-emergency and it would be difficult to obtain an appointment in the current circumstances?

**HSE Response:** HSE will also publish on appointed doctors/medicals as this affects more than the asbestos sector

I would like to thank the board of directors for their rapid response and prompt action on this matter to support the membership. I would also like to thank members for their patience, understanding and ongoing support during these unprecedented times of uncertainty.

Finally, I would like to reassure members that we are continuing to monitor the current situation and we endeavour to keep members up to date with any changes to the above. I hope you find this interim policy encouraging and supportive within your respective companies and we will continue to assist members wherever possible.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Evans

**Chief Operating Officer**

*On behalf of the board of directors*