

AJ Homes guidance: Home Moving Safely



COVID-19 is having an impact on industry professionals whose work involves direct contact with clients, occupiers, tenants and home movers whether in an office or through visits to a private residential property. This is causing significant uncertainty for many, especially as Government guidance continues to evolve.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide information to enable everybody to complete moves while maintaining safety as social distancing measures are eased in line with Government guidelines.

As the situation and guidance is constantly evolving, we intend for this information to be updated regularly.

1. Behaviour to reduce risks associated with COVID-19:

- Limit as much as possible any contacts with people outside your household – this is the most important condition for staying healthy.
- Transmission is affected by both duration and proximity of contact; individuals should not be too close to other people for more than a short amount of time. When in physical contact, stay side-to-side rather than facing people.
- When travelling, you should continue to avoid public transport wherever possible.
- Wherever possible, go directly from home to appointment and then back home and avoid peak travel times.
- Wash your hands as often as possible with soap or use hand sanitiser or wet wipes when you are outside.
- Don't shake hands. Use the knuckles of your fingers to touch the light switches, etc.
- Open doors with your elbow or otherwise, not your palm.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds and/or use hand sanitiser before and after going into a property.
- When you return home, wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds and/or use hand sanitiser.
- Always bring a hand sanitiser with you. Have hand sanitiser on hand near the front door of your home and in your car for use after touching items when you cannot immediately wash your hands.
- Cough or sneeze in disposable towels and throw them away.
- If you are using disposable gloves, when you take them off, immediately wash your hands thoroughly.
- Aim to wear a face-covering in enclosed public areas.
- Avoid touching your face at all times.
- Where possible, avoid touching surfaces when in someone else's home.
- Follow a common sense approach when interacting with, or entering, people's homes.

1. General guidance for different stages of the moving process

A. Before you move

For the foreseeable future everyone needs to look for easy alternatives to physical meetings wherever possible so use digital technology, telephone contact, email and video-conferencing tools - whatever suits you best.

There will be times when you will need to meet, for example, home appraisal, viewings, if you need to have a legal document witnessed and, in all cases, you must protect each other by following current social distancing guidelines.

However, if a meeting is required, wash your hands before and after using soap and water, dry them thoroughly, ideally with paper towels, and abide by the 2m (about 2 large strides) social distancing guidelines.

B. Documents, identity requirements, witnessing and signatures

Contracts can be electronically signed though your property lawyer may still post them to you to sign and return. Some legal documents need witnessing and your witness will need to be physically present. If you maintain social distancing and don't share pens, the risk can be minimised.

2. Considerations for your move

There are several key stages in the property purchase and rental process. The checklists below outline some things you need to know.

General guidance for Market Appraisal both sales and lettings

When AJ Homes comes to assess your home for a market appraisal, we will ask many questions about your property and have questions to you prior to the visit, in the interests of minimising time spent in your property, for example but not limited to:

- Why are you moving?
- Is the property occupied? If so, are the occupant's tenants or homeowners?
- How many people are currently in the property?
- Where are the fuse box, gas meter, water meter, stop cock, boiler, water storage tank, broadband connection located?
- Have you got copies of any electrical, gas safety or other guarantees/warranties for windows, boilers, historical damp treatment paperwork, planning documents for extensions, etc?
- Are you aware of any issues in the property? If yes, please specify where?
- Where is the cold-water storage tank located (if applicable)?
- Where is the hot water cylinder located (if applicable)?
- Has the property been subject to any subsidence? If so, what was the cause and has the problem been solved?
- What is the broadband service and where is the connection point?

Essential questions the day before AJ Homes visits your home

- ✓ Has anyone in the home had COVID-19?
- ✓ Has anyone at home displayed COVID-19 symptoms or not yet completed a required period of household self-isolation?
- ✓ Do you or anyone in your family have any COVID-19 symptoms?
- ✓ Is there someone in the property that could be/is in the high-risk category? If so, they should not be present in the property. Can a representative be appointed in their place?

Precautions that you can expect from AJ Homes whilst visiting your home

Where possible, we will:

- ✓ Use their own transport rather than public transport.
- ✓ Use hand sanitisers before entering your home and when leaving.
- ✓ Not shake hands with you and maintain the 2m social distance.
- ✓ Use knuckles rather than fingers to touch light switches and other contact points.
- ✓ Declare COVID-19 symptoms and postpone any meetings, adhering to government and public health guidance (PHG) at all times.
- ✓ Abide by the 2m (about 2 large strides) social distancing guidelines.
- ✓ AJ Homes will dispose appropriately of any PPE used during inspection/visit/home viewing in line with Government and PHG guidelines.

General guidance for vendors, landlords and tenants for viewings for both sales and lettings on occupied properties

When preparing the property for viewings please protect everyone by:

- ✓ Leave the property during viewings, so do advise if this is not possible (Can you go for a walk? Leave your home for food shopping? Be outside?)
- ✓ Viewings will ideally take place outside of commuting times to avoid rush hour.
- ✓ When handing over keys ensure they are sanitised by using hand sanitisers or passed via a disinfection wipe.
- ✓ Telling us if anyone in the home had COVID-19?
- ✓ Has anyone at home displayed COVID-19 symptoms or not yet completed a required period of household self-isolation?
- ✓ Do you or anyone in your family have any COVID-19 symptoms?
- ✓ Keeping windows and internal doors open wherever possible.
- ✓ Wiping down door handles/handrails/lift controls or other 'touch points', especially in the kitchen and bathroom.
- ✓ Opening a loft hatch and setting up a loft ladder.
- ✓ Turning the room lights on.
- ✓ Ensuring pets and children are not in the property.
- ✓ Clean door hands before and after each visit.
- ✓ After the visit, don't forget to wipe down any door handles and other 'touch points' with a disinfectant.

Precautions that you can expect from AJ Homes whilst visiting your home

Where possible, we will:

- ✓ Use their own transport rather than public transport.
- ✓ Use hand sanitisers before entering your home and when leaving.
- ✓ Not shake hands with you and maintain the 2m social distance.
- ✓ Use knuckles rather than fingers to touch light switches and other contact points.
- ✓ Declare COVID-19 symptoms and postpone any meetings, adhering to government and public health guidance (PHG) at all times.
- ✓ Abide by the 2m (about 2 large strides) social distancing guidelines.
- ✓ AJ Homes are likely to turn up 10 minutes before any viewings to ensure the property is prepared for the viewing.
- ✓ AJ Homes will keep a record of the visit and inspection using appropriate recording equipment especially for restrictions as a result of social distancing measures.
- ✓ AJ Homes will dispose appropriately of any PPE used during viewing in line with Government and PHG guidelines.

General guidance for applicants viewing properties both sales and lettings

- ✓ Has anyone viewing had COVID-19, displayed COVID-19 symptoms or not yet completed a required period of household self-isolation?
- ✓ Do you or anyone in your family have any COVID-19 symptoms?
- ✓ Only two adults should attend viewings. Where viewers need to be accompanied by small children they should be kept from touching surfaces.
- ✓ Viewings should be limited to members of the same household. eg If a couple wish to view but are currently living in separate households, they should book separate viewings
- ✓ 15-minute viewing and visits - Where possible, and depending on the size of the property, agents and viewers will be asked to minimise time inside the property.
- ✓ Before arranging a physical viewing of a property, consider only viewing those properties which you believe you are most likely to want to move into and minimise the number of visits you need to make.
- ✓ Note that viewings should ideally take place outside commuting hours and avoid using public transport wherever possible.
- ✓ Viewers are asked to wash hands ideally using a hand sanitiser prior to entering and leaving a property
- ✓ Ideally AJ Homes will show you around the property, but if this is not possible, please adhere to the 2m social distancing rule and wash hands or use a hand sanitiser before and after your visit.
- ✓ Avoid touching surfaces. If you have them use gloves and disinfectant wipes.
- ✓ Some more vulnerable occupants may ask people present to wear non-surgical face coverings you will be advised of this prior to the viewing.
- ✓ Any feedback or questions on the property should ideally be discussed by telephone after the visit.

Please be patient; it may take longer to secure a viewing due to health and safety precautions including sanitizing areas as we conduct more property visits. All of these measures are in place to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Precautions that you can expect from AJ Homes whilst visiting the property

Where possible, we will:

- ✓ Use their own transport rather than public transport.
- ✓ Use hand sanitisers before entering the property and when leaving.
- ✓ Not shake hands with you.
- ✓ Use knuckles rather than fingers to touch light switches and other contact points.
- ✓ Declare COVID-19 symptoms and postpone any meetings, adhering to government and public health guidance (PHG) at all times.
- ✓ Abide by the 2m (about 2 large strides) social distancing guidelines.
- ✓ AJ Homes are likely to turn up 10 minutes before any viewings to ensure the property is prepared for the viewing.

Considerations for your moving day

Checklist for moving day during COVID-19

You can reduce moving day stress by preparing beforehand.

Some removal services would normally offer packing services but these may be limited for now. However, boxes and packing equipment can still be supplied.

Before moving day:

If you need to send money to your solicitor check whether your bank account has any limit on the amount you can send via your online banking. If you arrange the payments in advance you can avoid a visit to your bank. Be alert to fraudsters – they look for signs you might be sending money so avoid posting on social media that you are moving and be especially suspicious if you receive communication that suggests your solicitor has changed their bank details.

1. Self-pack miscellaneous and non-breakable items wherever possible (ask your removal company what boxes and other materials they will supply and to itemise any associated costs).
2. Where possible, please clean your belongings, with standard domestic cleaning products before they are handled by others, including removal firms.
3. Packing by the remover is currently limited to china, glass and breakable items.
4. Dismantle for packing, and then re-assemble at the destination, furniture items in your new home wherever possible.
5. Co-ordinate your move with anyone living in the property so they will have time to move out before you or your removers arrive at the property. Check if there is an agreed time for the property to become vacant on the day of the move, for example normally 2pm.

Try to have everything packed and ready the night before your move.

On moving day, before the removers arrive:

1. Where possible, if you haven't already, please [clean your belongings](#), with standard domestic cleaning products before they are handled by others, including removal firms
2. Ideally leave the property while the removers are working, either by staying outside, or keeping yourself to one room, ensure pets and children are not in the property or keep them in the same room with you. Always observe the two metre social distancing measures. If you have access to disposable gloves, sanitising gels and possibly masks, please use them.
3. Clean down hard surfaces with warm soapy water, then disinfect these surfaces with household disinfectant.
4. Wipe down door handles/handrails/lift controls and other 'touch points' with household disinfectant (check first that it won't damage the surfaces).
5. Clean and wash toilet facilities as above.
6. Keep windows open to allow ventilation.
7. Have one designated bathroom, if possible, just for the crew to use. Place soap and hand-sanitiser within easy reach. Clean and wash the area as noted above.
8. Open a loft hatch or set up a loft ladder.
9. Wash your hands regularly, use paper towels to dry them and/or your own hand sanitiser

Remember - any keys handed over need to be sanitised by using hand sanitisers, or via disinfectant wipes. **Please Note:** It will not be possible for removal personnel to keep a 2m distance during your move from each other, but you should keep a 2m social distance from them.