



Coronavirus Customer Q&As – March 16 2020

Contingency plans in the UK

We have strong contingency plans in place to ensure our customers are looked after and mail is kept moving. The scale, vast network and business continuity expertise of our organisation means we have extensive experience in being able to quickly deploy diversion plans so we continue to provide customers with access to our collection and delivery services, and their mail.

What will happen if one of Royal Mail's sites has to close because of an outbreak of the virus?

We take the health and safety of our employees very seriously. Each case will be considered on its own merits. Any decision to close one of our units would be made in line with Public Health England guidance. We have strong contingency plans in place to ensure our customers are looked after and mail is kept moving. The scale, vast network and business continuity expertise of our organisation means we have extensive experience in being able to quickly deploy diversion plans so we continue to provide customers with access to our collection and delivery services, and their mail.

Will there be an impact to customers and their services in the event of site/s closures?

Royal Mail has many years' experience of contingency planning for a number of different scenarios. In the event of closing any Royal Mail site, we have strong contingency plans in place to ensure our customers are looked after and mail is kept moving in the event of localised service disruption.

We have a successful track record of doing this – and of keeping customers informed of temporary and permanent operational changes, if required.

Accessing Customer Premises to collect/deliver mail

If a customer has to close their own premises due to an outbreak, what can Royal Mail do with the customer's mail?

We have a strong track record of providing alternative ways for customers to access their mail. We would aim to keep customers' mail safe until they're able to collect it, have it redelivered or redirected/diverted to an alternative address. We will deal with these requests on a case by case basis.

Our company is asking all visitors to our premises to sign health declarations before entering. Are Royal Mail employees required to sign health declarations when collecting or delivering mail to an address?

Royal Mail is closely following PHE advice and good hand hygiene. We are not asking our employees to sign health declarations. We will follow normal site verification procedures such as signing of security visitor books to enter a building. If a customer is unwilling to allow our postmen and women on their premises, they would need to make alternative arrangements for us to drop their mail off on their premises/yard.

Customers' health & hygiene concerns

Can customers catch coronavirus from the mail?

Public Health England has advised that there is no perceived increase in risk of contracting the new coronavirus for handling post or freight from specified areas. From experience with other coronaviruses, we know these types of viruses don't survive long on objects, such as letters or parcels. This complements the highly publicised guidance from PHE for people to wash their hands more often than usual using soap and hot water.

A customer is blocking their letterbox/not opening the door to visitors until the threat is over.

What is the guidance on delivering their mail?

Public Health England has advised that there is no perceived increase in risk of contracting the new coronavirus for handling post or freight from specified areas.

In situations where we are physically unable to access a customer's property and/or they have blocked up their letterbox to prevent delivery, we will suspend delivery of mail to that address. We will hold all mail (for up to 18 days) for someone to collect from their local Customer Service Point (with the appropriate identification) or we can deliver to an alternative address in the delivery office catchment area. We will notify the occupants through a letter delivered to the address or left on the customer's premises where it can be easily seen.

Can Royal Mail verify that none of their employees visiting a customer site have been in affected locations within the last 14 days?

We take the wellbeing of our employees and customers very seriously. We are closely following Public Health England guidance and have provided this guidance to all employees. If a Royal Mail employee has returned from an affected area overseas or suspects that he/she may have coronavirus, they are advised to contact NHS 111 or their GP for the latest advice. It may be that the employee will be advised to self-isolate.

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Employee Care & Advice

What precautionary actions are you taking to ensure the health and safety of Royal Mail employees?

We take the wellbeing of our employees very seriously. In line with guidance from Public Health England, we are advising colleagues that good hand hygiene is the first and most important line of defense. As well as recommending regular washing with soap and water, disposable gloves are available to our people on request. This already forms part of our good hygiene practice.

What is your advice to Royal Mail employees who return from affected areas overseas?

We take the wellbeing of our employees very seriously. If a Royal Mail employee has returned from an affected area overseas, we will follow guidance from Public Health England. In some cases, it may be that the employee will be advised to self-isolate for two weeks before returning to work following a call to NHS111 or their GP.

What actions will Royal Mail take in the event of a suspected or confirmed case of coronavirus with one of our employees?

We take the wellbeing of our employees and customers very seriously. We are closely following Public Health England guidance.

If a Royal Mail employee has returned from an affected area overseas or suspects that he/she may have coronavirus, they are advised to contact NHS 111 or their GP for the latest advice. It may be that the employee will be advised to self-isolate.

Should we have a confirmed employee case, we will work with Public Health England who sets out the required actions for the relevant Royal Mail office (if the employee has been in work) and any wider actions relating to people the employee has been in contact with. We have all the systems and processes in place to carry out cleaning of our property, if required. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Changes to operational delivery process (since 14 March)

Q: What if the customer doesn't want to accept an item at all for fear of contamination?

A: The delivery officer will update the PDA status to "Undelivered - No Answer" and leave a "Something For You" card so that the parcel can be collected at a later point. They will not treat the parcel as refused. It will be held at the CSP – and if not collected after 18 days, then returned to sender.

Q.: What will happen if a Customer goes to the CSP to pick up an item?

A: The CSP staff will be adopting the same temporary procedures i.e. not handing over the PDA for a customer to sign. But still confirming the surname of the person collecting the item and adding in to the signature box "XP1".

Q: What if the Customer doesn't mind signing on the PDA?

A: In the current situation, we will not be asking any customer to handle PDAs

Q: Will the delivery person still deliver to neighbour?

A: Yes, they will. But again no signature will be obtained but they will still be recording the delivery on the PDA and the name of the person accepting the item.

Q: Can the customer just ask for their item to be left in a safeplace?

A: No, the security of mail is very important, so there is no change to the delivery standards relating to safeplace, i.e. only RM Tracked items with the safeplace detailed on the tracked label.

Q: Can Customers still send products that require a signature at a Post Office?

A: Yes. Posting customers will still be able to send products that require a signature i.e. RM Sign For, RM Special Delivery Guaranteed, RM Tracked 24 & RM Tracked 48 – and will still be able to see who has accepted the item and on what date via Track & Trace. Instead of a signature they may see an entry "XP1". Postmen and women are being asked to put that code in the signature box so it can be seen why a signature wasn't obtained.

Q: How will you prove to me this item was delivered?

A: You will still be able to see who has accepted the item and on what date via Track & Trace.

Q: I get bulk postings – what will your postman do? Will they scan on site but not ask me to sign?

A: They will do exactly as they do now, the only difference will be that you will not be asked to sign a PDA but we will be capturing the surname of the person receiving the item/s.