# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Essential maintenance of the Roads Network** |
| **DATE** | **30 April 2020** |
| **BY** | **Lee Waters, Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport** |

In these challenging times, I want to pay tribute to all those who are working tirelessly on ensuring our road network is maintained for essential journeys.

The ongoing maintenance and operation of the strategic road network is critical to ensure our roads are safe for people to travel on for essential journeys, for the emergency services and for freight to transport goods and supplies. We also know that for many people working in construction, their job requires them to travel.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2020, requires all workplaces to take all reasonable steps to ensure the 2m physical distancing duty is complied with. This includes outdoor workplaces, such as construction sites and roadworks. The guidance, which accompanies the regulations explains what all reasonable measures means in practice – this is not about stopping people working, where they aren’t able to work from home, but changing the way they work.

Professional, industry and trade bodies, including the Construction Leadership Council for the construction industry, have published useful guidance about complying with the new regulations and best practice.

A copy of the Welsh Government’s guidance is available at: <https://gov.wales/taking-all-reasonable-measures-maintain-physical-distancing-workplace>

If contractors and authorities are confident their sites comply with the regulations and the physical distancing duty, they can start work again.

The Wales TUC has launched a whistleblowing hotline for any worker who wants to report health and safety concerns. They do not have to be a member of a union to access this service. Information about the hotline is at <https://www.tuc.org.uk/news/covid-19-health-and-safety-concerns-work>

It is important we continue to support our Welsh roads construction industry and its suppliers at this difficult time to ensure it has a future post-pandemic. I hope the public also supports the workforce as they go about the essential business of maintaining our strategic road network.

I am in regular contact with industry leaders about the developing situation that faces the sector and I am fully committed to continuing to engage through the coming months.

Thank you again to everyone operating in the Wales roads construction sector. You are making a hugely valued and critical contribution to the resilience of our country and I thank you for the enormous efforts you are undertaking to support the Welsh economy.