



Managing a crisis: Covid-19 and the threat to Critical National Infrastructure

In the midst of uncertainty and significant risk to people's health, it is clear that the need for robust and accurate screening and testing of Covid-19 is needed now more than ever.

The social and health implications of Covid-19 have already been well documented. However, what still remains largely unclear, is how badly our Critical National Infrastructure and supply chain is going to suffer and what measures can be put in place to preserve it, especially offshore.

It is imperative that workers involved in the energy industry are supported in their efforts to keep operations running. These are the personnel who will keep the lights on in homes across the country and heating in the homes of those who really need it. At this time, certain industries have a particular responsibility to keep operating.

Offshore activities need to continue, and staff need to be able to operate effectively in an environment with varying information and protocols. Vessels, for example, must pay particular attention to all personnel on the pre-embarkation and embarkation stage of deployment. Any personnel suspected with the virus must be dealt with effectively and sympathetically; human resources staff must have systems in place to ensure the wellbeing of all involved is catered for.

According to Jules Rawles, Director at specialist medical support company, SSI Energy, there are three core ways companies can help mitigate the effects of Covid-19 for their offshore personnel:

#1 Implement Robust Screening Measures

These can be instigated at reception centres, ports, and heliports. Key data can be obtained by carrying out assessments on paper such as detailed questionnaires and taking temperatures using a non-contact thermometer. If any personnel display symptoms under screening or assessments are indicative of an increased risk, they will be advised to self-isolate for 7 – 14 days, as per the Government's current advice.

#2 Covid-19 Rapid Testing

The next layer of mitigation can be conducted using a Covid-19 Rapid testing kit. This testing kit is particularly useful for the testing of personnel based offshore and must be conducted by a registered Health Care Professional.

The Covid-19 Rapid testing kit detects IgG and IgM antibodies and can assist in determining whether the person has Covid-19 or not. The kit gives a positive or negative result in just 10 minutes and is used as an in vitro diagnostic tool to precede precautionary measures that will need to be put in place to manage the spread of the virus.

#3 Strategic Advice

Determining a suitable course of action for mitigating the effects of COVID-19, requires the expert advice and strategic management of a qualified medical professional. Having an experienced medical professional to advise senior management and board members as to what the future may look like, is important for business continuity and the future.

For more information about Covid-19 screening, testing and advice, visit www.ssi-energy.com.