



TIMCON COVID-19 AND KEY WORKERS IN THE TIMBER PACKAGING & PALLET INDUSTRY - GUIDANCE

Following on from the guidance issued by Government (18th March 2020), the industry, through TIMCON, has sought further clarification on the definition of 'Key Worker' in relation to those employed in the timber packaging and pallet industry (which includes the sawmilling industry and the wood-based materials industry as their suppliers). The Government has recognised the importance of our industry in keeping the supply chain going at this critical time, stating:

"...as the pallet and packaging industry plays a vital role in the provision of food, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, critical workers in the industry are classed as key workers." *UK Government*

The most relevant sectors to us outlined in that guidance are:

"Transport:

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Food and other necessary goods:

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines)."

In reality, the whole of UK industry relies on our products to keep the economy moving, as almost all goods, equipment and machines are packed and transported on wooden pallets or in wooden boxes. Pallets and wooden packaging are essential to ensure the security of food supply, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment and to maintain supply chain integrity.

All critical roles within the industry, whether engaged in the manufacturing, reconditioning and repair of pallets and packaging; fork lift and lorry driving; administration and finance; sawmilling, importing and supplying of timber – everyone has an important role to play.

Based on Government guidelines, and if alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made, Key Workers should be given access to a school place for their children, assuming the Key Worker is happy to do so. Equally, the decision to give a school place is at the discretion of the school, but TIMCON advises its member companies to provide all assistance necessary e.g. a formal letter, to confirm with the school that a Key Workers specific role is necessary for the continuation of an essential service. Please also use this document to reinforce your worker's case, and refer schools to the TIMCON website for further information.

TIMCON continues to lobby government to maintain this Key Worker status in the coming months and monitor daily developments in this regard.

Finally, it is important to continue to mitigate the risk of infection by observing hygiene and sanitation guidelines, and reduce physical interaction wherever possible between Key Workers. Any Key Workers should carefully consider whether their children really do need to attend school to help minimise the spread of the virus.

(This information is correct as of 22.23hrs 23rd March and readers are advised to continue to look at other government and media sources in addition to TIMCON to ensure a full picture and gain possession of the latest information)