



THE PROFESSIONAL CENTRE
SLIEMA ROAD
GZIRA GZR 1633 - MALTA
TEL./FAX. (+356) 2131 4265
EMAIL: info@kamrataperiti.org
WEBSITE: www.kamrataperiti.org

K A M R A T A L - P E R I T I

To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

CIRCULAR 13/2020

4th May 2020

RE: COVID-19 Pandemic: Site inspections and site operating procedures

At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic, *periti* were among one of the first groups of economic operators to adapt their working practices in so far as their offices are concerned. In a survey carried out by the Kamra tal-Periti in the beginning of March, *periti* reported to have already implemented various social distancing measures, including the cancellation of non-essential meetings and subsequently the introduction of video conferencing, sanitisation of their office environment, and in 56% of cases the introduction of remote working.

While *periti* have a significant amount of control over their office environment, the same cannot be said for construction sites, and in situations where *periti* are required to inspect occupied properties for varied reasons.

The following are some practical guidelines to be followed in order to minimise the risks of contraction of COVID-19. These have been approved by the Health Authorities.

Inspections of occupied residential properties

It is recommended that prior to inspecting an occupied residential property, the owner / client / tenant is requested to:

- Declare that none of the occupants of the property returned from overseas during the 20 days prior to the date of inspection;
- Declare that none of the occupants of the property have contracted the COVID-19 virus and are under mandatory quarantine as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declare that none of the occupants of the property are under mandatory quarantine for any other reason as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declare that none of the occupants of the property are aware of having been in contact with a person who has contracted the COVID-19 virus during the 20 days preceding the date of inspection; and
- Declare that none of the occupants of the property fall under any of the categories of vulnerable persons as detailed in Legal Notice 111 of 2020 – if the latter is not the case, the procedures set out in Circular 11/20 are to be followed.

It is also recommended that *periti* request that, on the date of inspection, the owner / client / tenant ensures that:

- There is not more than one person present in the property;
- All doors and windows are opened prior to the inspection to allow full access to the property without needing to touch any surfaces;
- A distance of 2m is maintained at all times.



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Inspections of occupied commercial properties

The measures to be applied will depend on the nature of the property in question, its size, density of occupation and also on the purpose of the *periti's* inspection. In general, however, it is recommended that prior to inspection the owner / client / tenant is requested to:

- Declare that none of the regular occupants of the property have returned from overseas during the 20 days prior to the date of inspection;
- Declare that none of the regular occupants of the property have contracted the COVID-19 virus and are under mandatory quarantine as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declare that none of the regular occupants of the property are under mandatory quarantine for any other reason as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declare that none of the regular occupants of the property are aware of having been in contact with a person who has contracted the COVID-19 virus during the 20 days preceding the date of inspection; and
- Declare that none of the regular occupants of the property fall under any of the categories of vulnerable persons as detailed in Legal Notice 111 of 2020 – in such case the inspection should not be carried out unless the presence of the person concerned is absolutely essential, and then only after having followed the procedures outlined in Circular 11/20.

For the purposes of the above, a “regular occupant” is considered to be an owner or employee or consultant or client or service provider or any other person who regularly accesses the property, and who has visited the property during the 15 days prior to the date of inspection.

It is also recommended that *periti* request that, on the date of inspection, the owner / client / tenant ensures that:

- The number of people present in the property is kept to the bare minimum essential for the inspection to be carried out;
- All doors and windows are opened prior to the inspection to allow full access to the property without needing to touch any surfaces;
- A distance of 2m is maintained at all times.

Construction site inspections and meetings

In the case of construction sites, it is recommended that declarations similar to the ones outlined above are obtained from the contractor/s with regard to their workforce. These may include:

- Declaration that none of the personnel present on site have returned from overseas during the 20 days prior to the date of inspection;



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- Declaration that none of the personnel present on site have contracted the COVID-19 virus and are meant to be under mandatory quarantine as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declaration that none of the personnel present on site are meant to be under mandatory quarantine for any reason as imposed by the relevant Authorities;
- Declaration that none of the personnel are aware of having been in contact with a person who has contracted the COVID-19 virus during the 20 days preceding the date of inspection; and
- Declaration that none of the personnel fall under any of the categories of vulnerable persons as detailed in Legal Notice 111 of 2020 – in such case the inspection should not be carried out unless the presence of the person concerned is absolutely essential, and then only after having followed the procedures outlined in Circular 11/20.

In the case of sites where regular inspections are carried out, it may not be feasible to require these declarations prior to each and every inspection. It is recommended that the declaration is requested initially, and that the contractor/s is/are requested to inform the *periti*, the owner and the Project Supervisor immediately upon registering any change to the declarations. *Periti* may request a declaration at regular intervals, for example once a month.

In addition, it is recommended that:

- Only personnel who are absolutely necessary for the site inspection to be carried out are present on site at the time of inspection
- Attendees should maintain a distance of 2m from each other
- Rooms should be well ventilated and windows opened to allow fresh air circulation
- Wherever possible, meetings should be held outdoors

Construction site operating procedures

It is also important that the welfare of all personnel on sites is catered for at all times. This may be easier to achieve on larger sites, where contractors may be better equipped to provide certain facilities. Nevertheless it is recommended that all contractors are encouraged to implement as many measures as possible on their sites in order to minimise as much as possible the risks of exposure.

The *Kamra tal-Periti* has prepared a guidance note – Site Operating Procedures | Guidelines for construction sites during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is based on various recommendations by international organisations, and has also been presented to the local Health Authorities.

It is recommended that *periti* forward this document to their clients, and to the contractor/s and Project Supervisors appointed on the site which fall under their responsibility, and that these are encouraged to implement these measures for the safety of all.



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General measures

In addition to the above, the following guidance documents issued by the local Health Authorities are being referred for your perusal:

- Visits at homes
- Guidance on hand sanitisers
- Guidance on hand washing and the use of gloves
- Recommended measures for places of work
- Occupational health and safety measures

Furthermore, it is recommended that *periti* wear community masks while carrying out their duties as outlined above, in addition to the standard PPE, and that they use sanitiser whenever necessary.

Perit Simone Vella Lenicker
President