

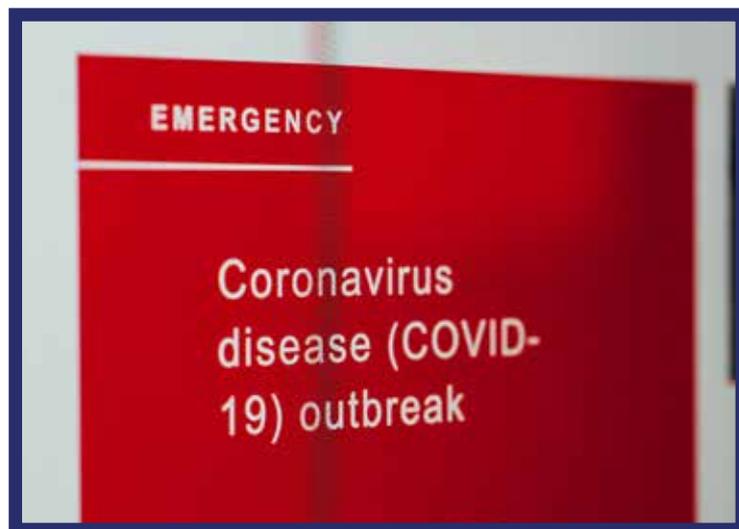
## REACTING TO CORONAVIRUS

In the middle of March, with the then-emerging Coronavirus situation, the MATS Group collaborated around options to help support our industry maintain its critical national infrastructure and services.

We subsequently agreed a 3 month extension to climber medical, climber and rescue training, emergency first aid and rooftop safety courses due to the difficulties in attending training provider facilities. As we come to the end of that extension period, the group will reconvene to determine our options. Keep an eye on our website and our LinkedIn page for future announcements.

We did not allow an extension to Radio-Frequency training as there are suitable e-learning options available. Approved RF course providers who may offer an online option can be found here

[https://www.arqiva.com/documentation/gatewaydocuments/Accepted\\_Training\\_Providers\\_December\\_2019.pdf](https://www.arqiva.com/documentation/gatewaydocuments/Accepted_Training_Providers_December_2019.pdf)



Anyone who's medical expires must complete the MATS medical questionnaire in GN-0005 – *Medical requirements for climbing masts and towers*. If possible, a telephone consultation should take place with a medical professional if services are still available.

In March we had to take the decision that anyone who hadn't completed any of the aforementioned mandatory initial training courses (i.e. new climbers) could not start to climb, access rooftops and undertake associated tasks as it presents an unacceptable level of risk to the industry.

## THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR...



Welcome to my first MATS newsletter during my tenure as the MATS Chairman, taking over the reigns from Alan Trueman. I would like to thank Alan for all the work and support he afforded the group during his 2 year stint as chair. During my 2 year role as Chairman, Andy Alexander,

Head of Assurance, Safety & Risk at Cornerstone will be supporting me as Vice Chairman.

My tenure has not started quite the way I had envisaged, helping to support the group through these challenging times but then this year has been anything but normal and is likely to continue to be this way for some time. Our industry has a vital role to play though in maintaining critical national infrastructure to ensure hospitals and essential services stay connected, as do families and friends at home.

As situations change, we will update what we can on our website and LinkedIn pages and look out for a refreshed website and some exciting news coming soon.

Stay safe and look out for each other.  
Stewart.

Stewart Mardle  
MATS Chairman

# MATS CONFERENCE 2020 POSTPONED TO 2021

We would like to thank everybody who purchased tickets and who agreed to exhibit at our 4th MATS Annual Conference which was originally due to take place in April and then October due to the Covid-19 situation. Leading up to the event our top priority remains the safety, health and well-being of you all. After consulting with stakeholders, we have decided we have no option but to postpone the conference again to next year. We have secured a revised date from the Ricoh Arena of **Tuesday 5th October 2021**. We would like to apologise for any inconvenience this second postponement may have caused but having consulted with all key stakeholders we believe a gathering of around 300 people this year simply would not be appropriate. We would like to place on record our thanks to sponsors and exhibitors who have all been very supportive and we look forward to a fantastic event next year when the implications caused by the pandemic should be over.



**SPONSORED BY**

# VIRTUA

THE COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPERTS  
[WWW.VIRTUA.UK.COM](http://WWW.VIRTUA.UK.COM)

-  NETWORKS
-  FTTX
-  CELLULAR
-  BROADCAST
-  INBUILD
-  PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Virtua are a leading provider of bespoke communications infrastructure services to the telecoms, broadcast, data and wireless industries. From the initial survey, to design, installation and through to test and optimization – Virtua can help. Our experts have extensive experience in their respected fields and as a company we have been involved in landmark

infrastructure projects – from new hospitals, to armed forces locations, stadiums, multi-storey offices and broadcast towers and masts.

Health and Safety is paramount in our industry so Virtua look forwards to supporting MATS in the future.

## NATE CONFERENCE



From left to right: Nick Kyonka STAC, Stewart Mardle MATS, Todd Schlekeway NATE.

During February, I got the opportunity to attend the NATE (National Association of Tower Erectors) conference in Raleigh, NC in the USA.

At the conference, I met Nick Kyonka STAC (Structure, Tower and Antenna Council) program Director and Todd Schlekeway, Executive Director of NATE. Both organisations carry out a similar role to MATS across Canada and the USA respectively.

5G was, not surprisingly, the main focus of the conference. Looking at small cell technology in particular and how infrastructure can be shared to reduce the impact. The impact on the workforce is also going to be a challenge with not only how to overcome the skilled worker shortage but how to install and maintain the heavier 5G equipment too. Plenty of work to do for all of us but maybe things just got a little easier with the relationships being forged across the pond.

Stewart Mardle  
MATS Chairman

# 5G & Coronavirus

Unfortunately despite there being no credible scientific evidence to substantiate their view, some people have hypothesised about a link between coronavirus and 5g and have committed arson and sabotage in excess of 100 telecommunications and broadcast structures - most of which did not accommodate 5g antennas. There have also been over 200 incidents of verbal or physical aggression towards telecommunications engineers.

## Lone Working

- Always follow your employers Lone Worker Policy.
- Make sure mobile or lone worker device is charged and with you.
- Before setting off review the site access details to check if there are known security issues.
- Upon arrival take note of your surroundings.
- Check the location for suspicious or aggressive persons before leaving your vehicle.
- If engaged with a threatening person – create distance, remain calm and remove yourself, personal safety comes first.
- Keep your work tools close to reduce these being used to threaten or cause harm.
- If working alone don't wear audio headphones
- Don't take unnecessary risks.
- Report all incidents to your employer and, where appropriate, to the police.

## Suspicious Items Guidance

- **CONFIRM** that you believe the item is suspicious and WHY - Do not touch it.
- **CLEAR** the immediate area. Move people away to a safe distance and prevent people from re-entering.
- **COMMUNICATE** with the control room and/or supervisor clearly and simply.
- **CONTROL** access to the cordoned area until it is deemed safe. Try and keep witnesses on hand for police.

## Suspected Exposure to Hazardous Substance

- **REMOVE** exposed persons from the immediate area to avoid further exposure. Fresh air is important.
- **REMOVE** affected outer clothing, avoiding pulling over the head if possible. Do not pull off clothing that is stuck to skin.
- **REMOVE** carefully any obvious substance from skin using a dry absorbent material to either soak it up or brush it off.

It is important that any such events get reported to the site owner so that MATS Group members and other operators can share intelligence and monitor the threat level.

In addition to this, Government Agencies have collaborated to produce the following Telecommunications Industry Crime Prevention Alert:

## Hostile Reconnaissance

### POSSIBLE SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOUR:-

- Loitering in restricted or non-public areas.
- Observing or photographing the site, CCTV cameras and / or security features or staff.
- Asking unusual questions.
- Hiding their faces or in disguise.

**Vehicles are also often used by criminals planning attacks. Be aware of vehicles parked out of place or left abandoned, or a vehicle retracing the same route.**

- Make a note of vehicle registration numbers, make and model.
- Make a note of descriptions of people.
- What are they doing that seems suspicious.
- Have you taken a photo or video footage.

What you need to report to emergency services

### ETHANE

#### E - EXACT LOCATION

What is the exact location or area of the incident?

#### T - TYPE OF INCIDENT

What kind of incident is it?

#### H - HAZARDS

What hazards or potential hazards can you see?

#### A - ACCESS

What are the best ways to get in and out?

#### N - NUMBER OF CASUALTIES

How many casualties are there, and what condition are they in?

#### E - EMERGENCY SERVICES

Which and how many, emergency responder resources/people are needed or are already there?

## Remember...

Always remove yourself from risk;

Never engage with hostile individuals, personal safety comes first.

Always report suspicious activity to the Police via 101 or where your case is an emergency phone 999.

## Commhoist your END-TO-END Telecoms Logistics contractor

Commhoist is a mobile telecoms network logistics contractor providing an END-TO-END managed service for new builds, upgrades, decommissioning and maintenance works.

Providing safe, right first time mobile telecoms logistics



Commhoist  
www.commhoist.co.uk

# MATS Group welcomes a new member

We are very pleased to welcome WPD Telecoms as a new member of the MATS Group. Founded in 1999 as the formerly named Surf Telecoms, WPD Telecoms is the telecoms arm of Western Power Distribution, the electricity distribution electricity network operator for the Midlands, South West and South Wales. Originally established to provide the internal telecommunications for the parent company, WPD Telecoms continue today to provide services for Western Power Distribution as well as being a key player in the telecoms market. WPD Telecoms offers dark fibre, managed bandwidth and site sharing facilities to external customers.



*Providing fibre, bandwidth and site facilities*

A fibre optic network stretching from the South West of England, through South Wales and across to the East and West Midlands.

A portfolio of over 200 radio masts and colocation sites offering data centre quality space with resilient blackstart compliant power in the UK.

A secure and reliable network that is lit with a platform offering up to 100Gb low latency and resilient connectivity solutions to the wholesale market, SME's, broadcasters, education sector and many more. Operating to ISO9001, ISO27001, WPD Telecoms delivers secure and resilient network solutions to both Western Power Distribution and an increasing number of external customers.

## MATS GROUP MEMBERS

### MATS members include:

- Air-wave Motorola Solutions
- Arqiva
- Babcock
- BT
- Cellnex UK Ltd
- Cornerstone
- KCOM Group
- MoD
- NATS
- National Crime Agency
- Network Rail Telecom
- O2 Telefonica
- Shared Access
- SPYDER
- Wireless Infrastructure Group (WIG)
- WPD Telecoms
- Vodafone



The MATS Group may be contacted by email at: enquiries@matsgroup.info

Follow us on  
**LinkedIn**

[www.linkedin.com/company/mats-group](http://www.linkedin.com/company/mats-group)

Now over 2700 followers