

Techniques for Managing the Impact of the Coronavirus

on Construction Projects

March 2020

What is the risk to U.S. workers?

The risk from COVID-19 to Americans depends on characteristics of the virus, including how well it spreads between people, the severity of resulting illness, the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus, and the relative success of these measures.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Although the ongoing outbreak likely originally resulted from human exposure to infected animals, COVID-19, like other coronaviruses, can spread between people. Infected people can spread COVID-19 through respiratory secretions, especially when they cough or sneeze. According to the CDC, spread from person to person is most likely among close contacts (about 6 feet). Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It's currently unclear if a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes, but it is a possibility.

This document is meant to provide guidance on how to manage to COVID-19 at the project level.

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EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is critical individuals DO NOT report to work while they are experiencing illness symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, chills or fatigue.
- Individuals should seek medical attention if they develop these symptoms.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Do not host large group meetings. The CDC recommends we avoid gatherings of 10+ people and when meeting, we keep a 6-foot distance between people. Meetings should be performed online or via conference call whenever possible.
- To limit the number of people on a job site, allow nonessential personnel to work from home when possible.
- Discourage handshaking and other contact greetings.

JOB SITE PRACTICES

- Communicate key CDC recommendations (and post signage where appropriate) to your staff and tradespeople:
 - How to protect yourself.
 - If you are sick.
 - COVID-19 frequently asked questions.
 - Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Supervisors should consider asking the following questions to all employees prior to entering the job site. If they answer “yes” to any, CDC guidelines should be consulted in requesting they leave the job site immediately. Anyone asked to leave should not return to work until 24 hours after they are free from a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - Have you or anyone in your family, been in contact with a person that is in the process of being tested for COVID-19?
 - Have you or anyone in your family traveled outside of the U.S. within the last two weeks?
 - Have you been medically directed to self-quarantine due to possible exposure to COVID-19?
 - Are you having trouble breathing or have you had flu-like symptoms within the past 48 hours, including: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, chills or fatigue?
- Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60%-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.
- Do not congregate in lunch areas.

- Do not share tools.
- Do not share personal protection equipment (PPE).
- Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer's recommendation prior to each use.
- Ensure used PPE is disposed of properly.
- Utilize disposable gloves where appropriate; instruct workers to wash hands after removing gloves.
- Disinfect reusable supplies and equipment.
- Identify specific locations and practices for daily trash such as: paper, hand towels, food containers, etc. Instruct workers responsible for trash removal on proper PPE/hand-washing practices.
- Provide routine environmental cleaning (doorknobs, keyboards, counters and other surfaces).
- Do not use a common water cooler. Provide individual water bottles or instruct workers to bring their own.
- Utilize shoe sanitation tubs (nonbleach sanitizer solution) prior to entering/leaving job site.
- Instruct workers to change work clothes prior to arriving home and to wash clothes in hot water with laundry sanitizer.
- Don't stack trades if possible.
- Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles.
- Request additional/increased sanitation (disinfecting) of portable toilets.
- Avoid cleaning techniques, such as using pressurized air or water sprays, that may result in the generation of bioaerosols.

WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE HAS BEEN EXPOSED OR IS SYMPTOMATIC

Refer to the CDC's Risk Assessment and Public Health Management Decision Making to assess the risk.

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not return to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g., cough suppressants).
- Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- If an employee appears to have acute respiratory illness symptoms at work, they should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately.
- Instruct sick employees to use telemedicine services or call their healthcare provider for further assessment and instructions. Lockton has confirmed that the major telemedicine providers are specially trained, equipped and ready to remotely assess COVID-19, the flu and other minor health issues.
- Communicate your company's human resources practices for managing sick time related to COVID-19.

- COVID-19 testing can be performed for free through CDC-designated laboratories.
 - Quest and LabCorp now have the ability to test.
 - Physicians can order the test for individuals who meet the CDC’s criteria for testing.
 - In many instances, the cost share is waived, so the test is covered at 100% by the plan.
 - Check with your carrier or self-funded plan to understand how the test will be covered.
- Do not require a healthcare provider’s note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work.
- Do not communicate information about these cases to your workforce or customers without the guidance of public health officials.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the ADA and with the guidance of public health officials.
- Employees exposed to a coworker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

Additional Resources

- Lockton Coronavirus Webpage - <https://www.lockton.com/coronavirus>
- CDC Coronavirus Webpage - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- OSHA Coronavirus Webpage - <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19>



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