

PANDEMIC PLANNING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. Version 1.0 – March 19th, 2020

As we as an industry approach the current situation these are some best practices and thoughts collected from many in the industry related to how we maintain business continuity despite the situation.

On all construction sites, either as a sub or prime contractor, you must do everything possible to follow the advice of Health Officials.

How COVID-19 is transmitted: overall guidance for protecting yourself and others

The following is a general overview of how COVID-19 is transmitted. It is provided merely for background and to inform strategies aimed at implementing the rules set out in the balance of this document. Full details on these issues should be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Canada and the World Health Organization, or a medical professional.

- The virus is thought to spread through respiratory droplets. Respiratory droplets may be produced through a cough, a sneeze, normal breath or conversation.
- These respiratory droplets may cause viral transmission from person to person when individuals are near one another. Recent guidelines from the U.S. Department of Labor provide further guidance and recommend that individuals should avoid working less than six feet from others for prolonged periods.
- The respiratory droplets may also land on clothing or other objects. It may be possible for an individual to contract COVID-19 by first touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.

These general principles should be considered when applying the rules outlined below to a particular circumstance.

Your Health and Protecting Others.

If you are exhibiting flu-like symptoms such as fever, coughing or congestion: **Do not come to work;**

- Contact your supervisor and your Human Resources department to let them know that you are exhibiting the symptoms; and
- Consult with AHS '811' / a healthcare professional on next steps before returning to work.

The response to the COVID-19 virus continues to change on a regular basis. All parties are required to meet current requirements and be adaptable to new initiatives when required.

SITES:

Site Access:

- Post signs at all site entrances that say, “Site Sign in/out by texting Supervisor at _____”.
- Site supervisor to update sign-in log regularly throughout the day to know who is at site.
- All site orientations to be done verbally without signature outside the job shack.
- No transfer of papers. Site supervisor to sign on their behalf.

Site Meetings:

- Job toolbox meetings to be held outside, with appropriate social distancing or have people call in. No signatures or transfer of documents. Site Supervisor signs on their behalf.
- Hazard assessment’s and other paper submission documents boxes to be moved outside with two boxes – Documents can be retrieved 24 hours later.
- When arranging necessary inspections from consultants or authorities having jurisdiction, indicate to them they will not be allowed to visit our site if they are showing any signs of being sick.
- In person meetings must have no more than 10 people in attendance
- Consider conference / skype calls to reduce the number of attendees
- All non-essential events are canceled or postponed (e.g. site barbeques);
- Large job shacks limited to maximum 5 people and small job shacks limited to maximum 3 people. Social distancing required.
- Site constraints are based on site size using appropriate social distancing. Suggested guidelines are no more than 3 or 4 people working in 1000 sq. ft. of space, or 10 people working in 10,000 sq. ft. Examples and exceptions:
 - Tradespeople working in teams to do work (Carpenter and Apprentice) must know each other well enough to be sure of the proximity risk of working together.
 - For larger groups working together (concrete placement crews) who cannot manage social distancing to do their work must have a conversation with the Safety Advisor and the Project Team to ensure we can proceed with the work safely. Crews that work together all the time will have a lower risk than hastily assembled crews.
- Workers at sites should avoid working less than six feet from others for prolonged periods unless their role requires prolonged closer proximity. Case specific risks and solutions will be assessed by the workers employer for those individuals required by their roles to work within these close proximities;
- Individuals should utilize technologies available to them such as email, text and teleconferencing to minimize direct contact with others;
- The number of people allowed in the hoist at the same time will be reduced to avoid crowding
- Project teams should stagger break and lunch schedules to minimize the number of people near one another;

- Project teams may also consider staggering start / finish times aimed at reducing large group wait times at the gates and the hoists;
- Meetings should be held in the area where an individual works, instead of a large gathering point;
- For all remaining in person gatherings, and in work environments in general, participants should exercise recommended practices for reducing the risk of transmission as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Canada and the World Health Organization.

Jobsite Sanitation Measures:

- As hand sanitizer is becoming a scarce commodity Contractors are making immediate arrangements to construct temporary sinks / handwash areas with hand soap, paper towels and garbage cans. The locations will be at various high-traffic locations.
- Each subcontractor is responsible for providing hand sanitizer for their worker's needs.
- Each subcontractor remains responsible for cleanliness in their lunchrooms.
- Each subcontractor remains responsible to provide PPE, noting that glove use is mandatory at CCC.
- Each subcontractor is responsible for disinfecting shared tools, iPads, etc. between uses.

Other Options to Consider:

- Only one driver per vehicle or sanitize between drivers.
- Use only your own tools or sanitize between operators.
- At breaks maintain social distance: easy reference two arm lengths (1 metre).
- Eat lunch alone, where possible in your vehicle, respecting social distance.
- Workers who take public transit must sanitize their hands prior to starting work.

Safety Certificates etc:

- Ensure that you have all necessary staff and backup staff compliant for the next 6 months. There is no suggestion that rules around fall protection or first aid etc. are going to be altered.
- Certifications in general could become harder to obtain – get up to date now

Training on Tools:

- Some sites are already experiencing 20-50% loss of manpower. Check your crews to ensure you can still safely operate equipment and maintain workflow.

Shifts:

- Consider adjusting shifts to accommodate reduced density of crews and rotate availability of workers who may have challenges to manage children that are now not in school or daycare.

OFFICE:

Social distancing:

- If possible, have a work from home strategy, move desks apart, sanitize your office regularly.
- Larger organization have split their office staff between home and office. This allows distancing in the office by reducing density and allows the ability to switch out people if someone gets sick.

Warning on your door:

- Do not allow delivery people in your office unless they have confirmed they are in good health.

External workers:

- Have them complete a statement saying they are in good health before allowing them access to your premises.

Work from Home Security:

- Working from home brings risks to your organization. Workers must respect strict security rules to ensure they don't introduce viruses to your system. With many homes having children/teenagers it is imperative that workers logout from your system **every time** they leave their computer.
- The risk of phishing or other attacks is on the increase as the hackers are literally seeking to exploit the situation

RISK MANAGEMENT

Steps if a Case is Suspected:

- If it is suspected that someone is sick in the Workplace: Ensure protection of workplace and provide good solutions for workers.
- “Sick” means coughing or sneezing more than explainable from dust or environmental issues. It could be the common cold or the flu, either way if there is a possibility that someone is sick, they should be sent home.
- If a trade partner is suspected as sick, send them home and notify their manager.
- If an employee who can work from home effectively is identified as sick, they will be sent home and use technology to continue to work.
- If an employee who cannot work from home effectively is identified as sick, they will be temporarily laid off so they can recover.
- Anyone who goes home as sick or is sent home as sick must take the online test to see if they should get further COVID-19 testing. If they do not require further testing, they may return to work after showing no symptoms for 24 hours. Report this to your HR Manager, your supervisor and your Safety Advisor.

What to do with a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- The projections show that 30-70% of the population may ultimately get this illness. All the measures being implemented are to slow the spread to ensure the medical system has the capacity to treat those who need it when they get it.
- In the event of a confirmed case -
- Notify everyone by email as soon as it is confirmed. It is important to communicate well through this so you will be the first to know.
- Follow the guidelines provided by Alberta Health Services
- Research is showing the virus lasts max 72 hours without people so we would shut down the workplace for 72 hours. After we would go in and disinfect the hard surfaces like door handles to be sure, but it would be safe to continue work there.
- If we have a crew or entire worksite that is quarantined, we will quarantine them for 14 days, shut down the site for 72 hours and restart it as above with a substitute crew to keep work proceeding.

Other Business Considerations:

- We must work together to ensure job sites remain open. Strong leadership to fully comply with government mandates is imperative.
- Now is the time to review your active contracts to ensure you understand payment terms and what could impact them.
- Understand your insurance coverage.
- Ensure that you understand the HR implications of any layoffs or absenteeism that may result from this situation.
- Have a process in place should any short-term site shutdown occur
- Preplan your orderly exit if an order is issued today to close one or many sites.

- If an inspector is required to sign off on your work, ensure they have an option in place in case they are unable to complete their inspections.

Our industry is known as a safety conscious and diligent community of professionals and as we work through this situation we will learn, continuously improve and take our capabilities to new heights as we serve our customers our people and the communities that we are part of.