



## Corona Virus (COVID-19) Information and Recommended Practices

### What is COVID-19?

On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China: coronavirus disease 2019, or COVID-19. 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease.

Current symptoms for patients with COVID-19 include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Reports range from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports that **older adults and people with severe underlying chronic medical conditions**, like heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at a higher risk for developing more serious complications.

### How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads, the severity of the illness, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

The CDC considers the virus highly contagious and suspects it is spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 ft.), through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or be inhaled into the lungs.

It's possible COVID-19 can be contracted by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way it spreads.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the communities ("community spread") in some geographic areas. Community Spread means people have been infected with the virus in a given area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

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## Protecting Yourself and Others

There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure.

The CDC recommends the following everyday preventative actions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Wear a facemask if you are sick and around others. (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes. People caring for you should wear a facemask when around you. **If you are NOT sick**, you do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is.

## On the Job

### Employee Communication

All employers should consider how to best prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their workplace. Employers are encouraged to identify and communicate their objectives. This includes educating all employees on the symptoms; universal precautions, and what to do if they think they may have been exposed or are feeling ill; reducing transmission; protecting those at higher risk; maintaining business operations; and minimizing adverse effects on other entities in the supply chain.

It is critical that individuals NOT report to work while they are experiencing 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.

Encourage standard hygiene practices such as thorough and frequent hand washing with soap and water. Promote coughing and sneezing etiquette such as covering the nose and mouth.

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Communicate key CDC recommendations (and post signage where appropriate) for staff and tradespeople.

Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and family members, along with the closing of daycare and K-12 schools.

### **Office/Jobsite Recommended Practices**

Supervisors should ask the following questions to all employees entering the jobsite. If they answer “yes” to any, they should be asked to leave the jobsite 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 has tested positive for COVID-19?
- 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?

Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace and ensure adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms. Instruct employees to wash 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 preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Minimize mass groups meetings. Break up safety meetings, Stretch and Flex and have each foreman or lead person run their own. This can be done with a meeting with your foreman/leadmen prior to the day starting, so they can disseminate pertinent information to their respective crews.

Restrict access to enclosed and confined spaces. Confined and enclosed spaces (e.g., trailers) should be identified and access should be restricted to essential personnel only. Enclosed spaces (e.g., toilets, break areas) must be viewed as potential transmission areas and treated accordingly. Time spent in these areas should be reduced as much as possible.

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Allow the voluntary use of N95 respirators. At this time, the level of exposure risk on a typical construction jobsite does not warrant employer-mandated use of respirators for all workers.

Allow each crew to have their own sign in sheet for keeping time. This will mitigate large crowds when signing in and out. You can also stagger sign in/out times by five or 10 minutes for crews to keep the rush down and minimize grouping.

Material/Personnel Hoist capacity should be limited to five people, including the operator. Operator should be the only individual to open and close the hoist door.

Utilize stairwells to minimize wait times on the material/personnel hoist. Try to maintain at least six feet of separation from the person in front and behind you. Wear gloves when using the handrail.

If there is more than one stairwell, designate one for up and one for down to relieve congestion. This will help ensure that six feet distance can be maintained.

If ladders are utilized, try to erect multiple locations to allow less congestion at the top and bottom. Wear gloves when climbing ladders.

Utilize equipment for material handling to move material at a time. This will help minimize foot traffic in the area and allow for safe distances to be maintained.

Stagger work hours or have one crew stay late or start early to move material and equipment into place for the following days.

The six feet requirement for social distancing will be nearly impossible to comply with. Everyone **MUST** regularly communicate their health, and interactions with people off site, if someone is not feeling well, or has been in contact with potentially at-risk individuals. Stress that each individual crew maintain constant communication about their health with each other.

Try to keep the same individuals assigned to a crew. This will help maintain consistency of personal health knowledge and communication to everyone, as well as making it easier to identify someone exhibiting any signs of exposure.

Do not congregate in lunch areas.

Do not share tools or personal protection equipment (PPE). Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer's recommendations 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.

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Identify specific locations and practices for daily trash such as: paper, hand towels, food containers, etc. Instruct workers responsible for trash removal in 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.

Utilize shoe sanitation tubs (non-bleach sanitizer solution) prior to entering/leaving jobsite.

Instruct workers to change work clothes prior to arriving home; and to wash clothes in hot water with laundry sanitizer.

Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles.

Request additional/increased sanitation (disinfecting) of portable toilets.

Avoid cleaning techniques, such as pressurized air or water sprays that may result in the generation of bioaerosols.

### **Managing Sick Employees**

Require sick employees to stay home. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness should stay home until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater, using an oral thermometer), and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).

### **Resources**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

[https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20\\_coronavirus-guidance\\_8.5x11\\_315PM.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/03.16.20_coronavirus-guidance_8.5x11_315PM.pdf)

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osha/osha20200309>

<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf>

<https://www.fisherphillips.com/resources-alerts-comprehensive-faqs-for-employers-on-the-covid>

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