

## COVID-19 and the Construction Industry

**All contractors should incorporate COVID-19 transmission and prevention into all job hazard analyses and pre-task safety planning for all aspects of the work.** This tool is provided solely as a guideline. Contractors should continually evaluate the specific hazards at their job sites along to determine the most appropriate job hazard analysis for the project/task as it relates to the spread and/or transmission of COVID-19.

- 1. Maintain Clear and Frequent Communication With Employees**
  - Communication about what the company is doing and what is being done to keep employees safe will help to ease some of this uncertainty.
  
- 2. Encourage Employees To Stay Home If They're Sick**
  - One of the most important messages around COVID-19 is that symptoms can be mild. Anyone who is sick should stay home. Anyone experiencing symptoms (i.e. **aches, fever, cough, shortness of breath**) should stay home.
  - Employees should notify their supervisors and stay home if they are sick. If an employee is concerned they have COVID-19 symptoms they may complete the self-assessment tool or call 811  
<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment/>
  
- 3. Encourage Employees to Stay Home or Work From Home When Possible**
  - While this may only apply to Management Staff, Finance and Admin staff, the ability to limit exposure where possible is the best move. While construction workers on-site aren't able to work from home, modern technology allows for many office workers to do just that.
  
- 4. Limit Sub Trades and Non-Essential Personnel On-Site and Limit Customer Interactions**
  - Site supervisors and project managers should look over project plans and limit the number of workers on-site where possible.
  - Social distancing is a term that means reducing the amount of physical interaction between people to help slow the spread of the disease. It is not about stopping it – the reality is that COVID-19 won't be going away any time soon. Instead, it is about reducing how many people get infected all at once to reduce the pressure on health care systems.
  
  - While construction is expected to continue in many communities and regions, it is important to keep social distancing in mind and review who

the key or essential persons are who need to be at the job site or on a project at this time.

- Businesses that have storefronts or interact with customers on a daily basis should consider closing down and limiting customer interactions. Leaning on e-commerce solutions for things like renting construction equipment will help to keep things moving while embracing social distancing.

#### **5. Use Virtual Meetings to Reduce Group Gatherings**

- Use virtual meetings and standups. Reducing group gatherings and meetings is a key part of social distancing.
- Company emails, video group meetings, one-on-one phone call with site supervisors, or a phone call at the beginning of the day are a few ways to reduce meetings without compromising communication

#### **6. Be Realistic About On-Site Sanitation**

- Hand handwashing and sanitation are needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. It is important for companies to provide contractors and operators with the means to keep themselves safe.

A few ways to do this are:

- Provide access to soap and hand washing station and/or hand sanitizer to every employee on sites
  - Handwashing <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/Covid19-Hand-Washing-Poster.pdf>
  - Keep validated wipes and/or recommended cleaners in each piece of equipment and encourage wipe downs in the morning and at night <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/files/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning-NL.pdf>
  - Increase portapotty and washroom cleanings
  - Increase site trailer and lunchroom cleaning schedules
  - Increase frequency of cleaning of high touch services
- storage of personal gear such as jackets, vests and rain gear are not permitted on-site unless stored in a location where contact with individuals is not possible (an infected individual may have left respiratory droplets on their clothing, which could expose others if they touch the clothing)

#### **7. Keep Operators Isolated**

- Limiting the swapping of machines and changing of operators can help reduce exposure to those on-site. Assign individuals to a single duty while

- on site. This social distancing at the workplace will help to reduce exposure while construction sites remain operational.
- It is important to encourage communication over radios or plan timed check-ins to ensure that safety is not being compromised during these times.

**8. Job site visitors**

- Restrict the number of visitors to the job site, including the trailer or office.

Information is updated frequently. For more information please visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>

**March 20, 2020**