Recommended COVID-19 Response Plan for Construction Employers

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The Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America (LHSFNA) recognizes that LIUNA signatory employers are committed to ensuring the safety and health of their workforce, including taking the appropriate steps to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus known as SARs-CoV-2 and the disease it causes, COVID-19.

Summary of Recommended Actions

What Can Construction Employers Do?

- Perform a risk assessment of the jobsite.
- Educate/train workers about general precautions and regularly communicate plans to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Reinforce good hygiene practices and take steps to make it easy for workers to frequently wash their hands.
- Institute policies and practices that maintain physical distance between workers.
- Identify, clean and sanitize high-risk transmission areas regularly.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Require sick workers to stay home and send sick workers home.

What Can Construction Workers Do?

- Maintain good workplace hygiene, including hand washing practices and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet from other workers and limit large group interactions. Follow these same practices off the job.
- Report symptoms of COVID-19 immediately. If you are sick, stay home. If you feel sick and are at work, tell your supervisor.
- Cooperate with response measures instituted by your employer and those recommended by health officials at the federal, state and local level.
- Do not share other workers' phones, PPE or other work tools and equipment.

The following guidance is designed to assist construction employers with implementing these recommended actions. This information is based on our current understanding of the virus and may need to be updated as this situation evolves.

Determining Risk for Construction Workers

Currently, construction is classified as a lower risk occupation according to the OSHA's Occupational Risk Pyramid for COVID-19. Current information suggests COVID-19 is spread through:

- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, followed by touching the mouth, nose or eyes
- Airborne respiratory droplets expelled during regular talking and breathing as well as coughing and sneezing
- Touching a contaminated surface or object, then touching the mouth, nose or eyes

Because of these transmission methods, being in close proximity (within but not limited to six feet) to an infected person can result in transmission. **Enclosed spaces (e.g. trailers, toilets), confined spaces and any space with recycled air presents additional exposure risk and should be avoided as much as possible.**

General Precautions for Construction Workers

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick or have close contact with someone who has COVID-19, stay home and call your healthcare provider.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol when soap and water aren't available. Always follow good handwashing practices:
  - Upon arriving at the jobsite and before going home at the end of the day
  - Before and after eating
  - After using the toilet
  - After touching garbage or other waste materials

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze into a tissue if possible or your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands, when tissues aren't available. Dispose of tissues in the trash after use.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as much as possible.
- Practice social distancing by limiting person-to-person contact within six feet, especially in large groups or in enclosed spaces. Don't shake hands when greeting others.

What Steps Can Employers Take to Limit the Spread of the Virus?

Ensure workers are able to follow good handwashing practices.

- Provide clean water and soap for workers to use several times a day. On construction jobsites, this may take the form of temporary water stations, such as setting up water jugs and hand soap throughout the jobsite.
- If clean water and soap are not available, provide hand sanitizer. Ensure that stations in toilets stay stocked at all times and provide additional hand sanitizer when needed.
- If soap and water or hand sanitizer is not available, a solution of bleach and water can be used for handwashing. It is not the preferred option, as frequent use may lead to contact dermatitis or lung irritation, especially if the prepared dilution is strong. Starting with common household bleach (5 percent strength in the U.S.), prepare the following solution for handwashing in a spray bottle:
  - 1.5 teaspoons OR half a tablespoon (about a capful of bleach) per quart of water
- Provide single use paper towels and trash cans for disposal.
- Allow workers to go on break to wash their hands, especially after using the bathroom and before or after eating.

Utilize work practices when feasible to limit the number of potentially exposed workers on the jobsite at one time. This may include scheduling (e.g., staggering shift start/end times) or rotating crew access to a designated area during a shift. Stage the jobsite to stagger work and limit overlap of work 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.

Limit the number of workers gathering together at one time. Modify jobsite communications and planning to reduce or eliminate group gatherings. This includes communal break areas and any other activity that would bring a group of workers together on a jobsite. Create policies around the delivery of materials and visits by third parties to the jobsite.

When possible, practice social distancing. Instruct workers to maintain a distance of at least six feet apart as much as possible on the jobsite, whether indoors or outdoors, unless the task warrants otherwise.

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.

Practices for Cleaning and Disinfecting High-Risk Transmission Areas

Frequently clean and sanitize surfaces in common areas (e.g., break rooms, lunch areas, changing areas) as well as toilet facilities. Wipe down high-touch surfaces (e.g., faucets, handles to toilet facilities, tools).

Place handwashing stations, hand sanitizer or other hand cleaning methods at the entry and exit to the project or jobsite.

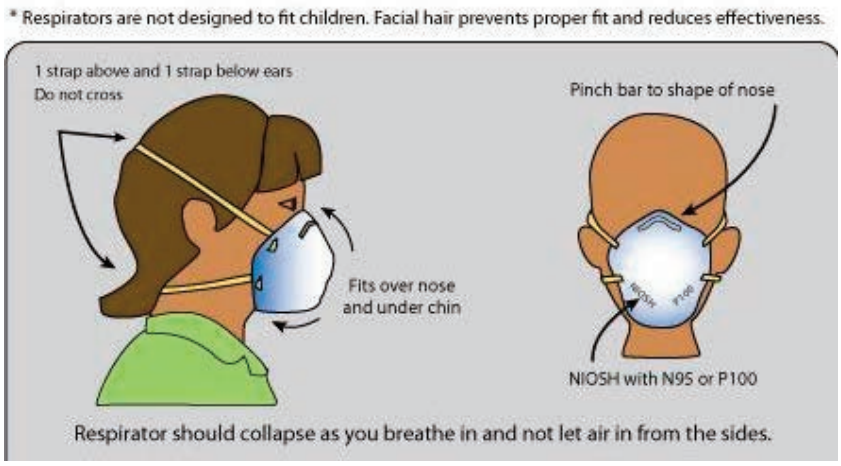
Clean and sanitize toilet facilities using the following best practices:

- Keep toilets, clean, sanitary and operational at all times. Ensure proper disposal of waste from these facilities.
- Consider providing additional toilet facilities if several workers will need to use the restroom at the same time (e.g., during scheduled breaks).
- Set a servicing schedule for cleaning, waste removal and replenishment of supplies such as toilet paper and handwashing agents.
- Use an EPA-registered cleaning agent specifically labeled for SARS-CoV-2: www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.

- If an EPA-registered cleaning agent is not available, a solution of bleach and water can be used. Starting with common household bleach (5 percent strength in the U.S.), prepare the following solution for disinfecting:
  - Two tablespoons bleach per quart of water
- Always follow manufacturer instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time).

Workers performing this cleaning and disinfecting should:

- Wear PPE. This may include N95 respirators, disposable gloves, protective clothing and eye protection. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning.
- Clean dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Be trained on safe donning, doffing and disposal of PPE to avoid infectious disease transmission. Clean hands immediately after PPE is removed.
- Be medically able to wear the type of respirator needed and trained on how to use it.
- Be aware of the differences between dust masks and N95s. Dust masks do not protect the wearer from airborne respiratory droplets. Remember: dust masks protect others from exposure to you; N95 respirators protect you from exposure to others.



- *Grasp outside edge near wrist.*
- *Peel away from hand, turning glove inside-out.*
- *Hold in opposite gloved hand.*

- *Slide ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove.*

- *Peel off from inside, creating a bag for both gloves.*
- *Discard gloves in waste container.*

Assessing Workers for Symptoms

The greatest risk for exposure to COVID-19 is from fellow workers. Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the seasonal flu and may include mild to moderate respiratory illness, fever, cough and shortness of breath. Workers who present symptoms, such as feveror difficulty breathing, should call their health care provider. Workers should stay home if they:

- Are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- Have known exposure to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Suspect they may be infected but don't yet have symptoms (these workers should self-quarantine and seek testing)

Workers who experience these symptoms at work should report it immediately to a supervisor, be isolated from fellow workers and leave the site. Workers should follow a two-week quarantine after the onset of COVID-19 symptoms to prevent transmission of the virus to others. To limit the spread of the virus and its impact on daily operations, employers should consider available telework options for office staff.

Employers may consider implementing daily wellness checks before workers access the project or jobsite. Suggested assessment methods could include a questionnaire about potential symptoms and travel and/or a temperature check performed by a designated supervisor wearing the following PPE: an N95 respirator, protective clothing, disposable gloves and eye protection. If temperature checks are conducted, workers with a temperature of 100.4°F should be sent home and referred to their health care provider for further instructions. Because a person infected with coronavirus can pass the virus to others without exhibiting symptoms, temperature checks alone may not be sufficient to limit the spread of the virus.

LHFSNA Next Steps and Additional Resources

Recommendations to limit the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate risk to workers may change as public health officials learn more about the virus. Additional information about transmission risk, signs and symptoms, travel restrictions and steps for the

general public to limit the spread of the virus can be found in the Fund's fact sheet: *Coronavirus (COVID-19): Preparation and Response*, which is available at www.lhsfna.org.

CDC – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov
Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

OSHA – OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 – www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

NIOSH – Coronavirus Disease-2019 – www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html