SAFETY AND HEALTH GUIDANCE

COVID-19 Infection Prevention in Construction

October 27, 2020

California employers are required to establish and implement an Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) to protect employees from all worksite hazards, including infectious diseases. This guidance does not impose any new legal obligations. It contains information for construction employers on ways to update their IIPPs to include information on employee training and preventing the spread of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, at construction sites. This is mandatory in most California workplaces since COVID-19 is widespread in the community.

Train Employees on COVID-19

Provide training in a form that is readily understandable by all employees on the following topics:

- Information related to COVID-19 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — check for updates frequently — including:
  - **What COVID-19 is and how it is spread**.
  - **Preventing the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick**.
  - **Symptoms of COVID-19 and when to seek medical attention**.
  - How an infected person can spread COVID-19 to others even when they don't feel sick.
- California's COVID-19 **Industry Guidance for Construction**.
- The importance of frequent hand-washing with soap and water (or using hand sanitizer as a last resort where employees cannot feasibly get to a sink or hand-washing station), including:
  - Following CDC guidelines to scrub for at least 20 seconds.
  - When employees arrive at work and before they leave work.
  - Before and after eating or using the toilet.
  - After close interaction with other persons.
  - After contacting shared surfaces, equipment or tools.
  - Before and after wearing masks or gloves.
  - After blowing nose or sneezing.

NOTE: Hand sanitizers must have at least 60% ethyl alcohol. They are less effective than hand-washing in preventing the spread of COVID-19 but can be used as an interim measure if a hand-washing station is not immediately available.

- Maintaining more than six feet of separation with others and eliminating close contact with others (see Physical Distancing information on next page).
- Methods to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- The mandatory use of cloth face coverings, as required by the **California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines**, including:
  - Cloth face coverings are not personal protective equipment (PPE) and do not protect the person wearing the face covering.
  - **CDC has issued guidelines** that everyone should **use cloth face coverings** when around other persons.

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- Cloth face coverings can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent hand-washing.
- Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
- Face coverings should be washed after each shift and should be discarded if they no longer cover the nose and mouth, have stretched out or damaged ties or straps, cannot stay on the face, or have holes or tears.
- The employer is responsible for providing and ensuring employees use face covers at work.

- Coughing and sneezing etiquette, including covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue or a sleeve instead of a hand.
- Safely using **cleaners and disinfectants**, which includes:
  - Carefully following label directions.
  - The hazards of the cleaners and disinfectants used at the worksite.
  - Ventilation requirements.
  - Wearing personal protective equipment (such as gloves).
  - Ensuring cleaners and disinfectants are used in a manner that does not endanger employees.
- The importance of not coming to work if they have **symptoms of COVID-19** as described by the CDC, such as a fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea or if they live with or have had close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- To seek medical attention if the symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on **CDC's webpage**.
- Use repeated safety stand-downs or toolbox/tailgates — while maintaining physical distancing — to re-emphasize the training.
- Designate a site-specific COVID-19 officer at every job site to observe and ensure site workers are implementing what they have been trained to do.
- Information on employer or government-sponsored leave benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on **government programs supporting sick leave and workers' compensation for COVID-19**, including employees' sick leave rights under the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, and employees' rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the **Governor's Executive Order N-62-20** while that Order is in effect. Some cities and counties also require employers to provide sick leave benefits to employees.

Increase Cleaning and Disinfection

Establish and implement the following procedures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Make hand-washing stations more readily available and encourage their use.
- Employers should change productivity expectations to allow extra time for employees to wash their hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Establish procedures to routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects (e.g., door handles, steering wheels, touch screens, mobile equipment controls, carts, shared power tools) throughout the workday, including:
  - Using disinfectants that are **EPA-approved** for use against the virus that causes COVID- 19.
  - Providing EPA-registered disposable wipes for employees to wipe down commonly used surfaces before and after use.
  - Following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., safety requirements, protective equipment, proper dilution, contact time).
  - Following safe work practices such as never mixing products together and using adequate ventilation.

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- Cleaning visibly dirty surfaces first before disinfection. Disinfectants are less effective if used on soiled surfaces.
- Ensuring there are adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices, including cleaning products and tools and chemical resistant gloves. Make sure disinfectants are available to workers throughout the worksite.
- Cleaning and disinfecting vehicles between shifts and between workers.

Increase Physical Distancing

When used with face covers, physical distancing, also referred to as social distancing, is an infection control measure that can stop or slow down the spread of an infectious disease by limiting contact between people. Use the following distancing measures:

- Practice physical distancing at all times, including during work, breaks and in vehicles.
- Plan for office staff to have the ability to work from home.
- Stagger break and lunch times and spread out where employees spend their breaks by providing additional seating and shade areas.
- Limit crew size by staggering or increasing the number of work shifts.
- Maintain separation of six feet or more during work:
  - Limit the number of employees gathered at the start of a shift, in break areas or during trainings and other meetings to allow employees to spread out.
  - Limit the number of personnel riding construction passenger elevators at one time.
  - Ensure employees allow for at least 6 feet of clearance between each other when lining up for the lunch truck and restrooms.
  - Hold meetings electronically rather than in person whenever possible.
  - Perform job interviews and orientations over the phone or using video conferencing.
  - Identify choke points where workers are forced to stand together (e.g. hallways, hoists, buses) and control them.
  - Provide additional seating and shade structures.
- If employees are dispatched from a hiring hall, encourage the hiring hall to implement physical distancing measures, such as using additional locations for dispatch.
- Limit interaction with other contractors.
  - Where possible, limit the number of trades in the same area at the same time.
  - Maintain distance during interactions and deliveries.
- Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice physical distancing during non-work hours.
- Create specific instructions for deliveries to your worksites.
  - Establish a drop-off location and all the procedures to be used at the drop-off point.
  - Create signage to easily identify drop-off points. Include contact information on the signs to assist with questions leading up to delivery and upon arrival.
  - Create procedures to disinfect deliveries, such as wiping down boxes and delivered items.
- Provide alternative methods to reduce the spread of infection when physical distancing is not possible. Engineering controls such as physical barriers between workers and face coverings can help reduce community spread of the virus.
- In addition to physical distancing, provide face coverings or ensure employees use their own face coverings. Ensure they are used in accordance with **CDPH** and **CDC** guidelines.

At this time, health experts do not recommend the use of respirators by the general public for protection against COVID-19.However, employers must provide them to workers in the construction industry when needed to protect against other respiratory hazards.

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Ensure Good Hygiene Practices

Ensure toilets and hand-washing facilities are readily accessible to all employees at all times.

Employers should adjust productivity expectations to allow extra time for employees to thoroughly and frequently wash their hands.

- Restrooms must be clean and sanitary.
- Hand-washing facilities must be located at or near the restrooms.
- Soap or other suitable cleansing agent and single-use towels must be provided.
- Additional hand-washing supplies should be placed as close to work areas and break areas as possible to allow for frequent hand-washing.
- Encourage more frequent hand-washing.
- Encourage more thorough hand-washing. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- For delivery drivers, normally accessible restrooms on routes (e.g., restaurants, coffee shops) may be closed. Employers should provide employees alternative restroom locations and allow time for employees to use them.
- If employees have limited access to hand-washing or hand sanitizing, employees as a last resort can use disposable gloves to limit hand contact with potentially contaminated surfaces. Employers should encourage employees to change gloves frequently and before touching their face, smoking, eating or using the restroom. In addition, provide an adequate supply of gloves and make them readily available. Employees should wash or sanitize hands as soon as possible after removing gloves.
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout worksites and to delivery drivers for times when access to soap and water may be limited.
- If respirators and other PPE are worn to protect against other hazards at work, hands should be washed before putting on PPE and after taking it off. Reusable PPE should be cleaned and sanitized per manufacturers' instructions.

Implement Safe Work Practices

- Limit the sharing of tools as much as possible. If tools must be shared try to group them to be used by people who reside together or travel to work together. Shared tools must be sanitized between users.
- If fans or other means of ventilation are used on the job, place them to avoid blowing air from one worker or group of workers to another.
- Encourage workers to drive to worksites or parking areas by themselves. They should avoid having passengers or carpooling together unless they are already sheltering in place together. If carpooling cannot be avoided riders should sit as far apart as possible, wear face coverings and wash hands after the trip.
- Discourage shaking hands.
- Discourage the sharing of food and water. Provide single use bottles rather than using shared water stations or dispensers.

What to do with Workers Who Might Be Sick with COVID-19

- Immediately send employees with **COVID-19 symptoms** home or to medical care as needed.
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Ensure employees who received a COVID-19 diagnosis return to work only after meeting the criteria in the **CDPH Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis**.
- Ensure employees who return to work following an illness promptly report any recurrence of symptoms.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow **CDC-recommended precautions**.

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- Encourage sick workers to stay home by implementing work policies that do not penalize workers for missing work because they have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Consider paid sick leave benefits to help prevent the spread among workers who might otherwise work out of economic necessity. Educate eligible employees on other benefits they can access if symptoms, illness or caring for an ill family member prevents them from working.
- The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act** requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Certain counties and cities also require employers to provide sick leave benefits to workers.
- If someone goes home because they are sick, the area where the person worked and the tools and equipment they used should be disinfected prior to use by others.
- Establish procedures to notify local health officials upon learning that someone has a COVID-19 infection. These officials will help employers determine a course of action.
- Employers can implement health screening programs to ensure that employees showing up to work are healthy. Employers may choose to prohibit employees with a high temperature (100.4 degrees F or higher) from entering the worksite. Train employees on self-screening before they come to work. If conducting workplace screening, provide employees performing screening with appropriate personal protective equipment. In light of personal protective equipment shortages, use gloves, eye protection and a face covering. Have screened employees wear a face covering or cover their nose and mouth with cloth or other material during screening. Use touchless thermometers. Ensure screeners maximize their distance from the employee being screened.

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Additional COVID-19 Resources for Construction

- **California Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response**
- California Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response. **COVID-19 Industry Guidance: Construction**
- California Division of Occupational Safety and Health. **Cal/OSHA Interim Guidelines for General Industry on 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**
  - **Cal/OSHA Injury and Illness Prevention Program**
  - **Log 300 recordkeeping requirements**
  - Reporting Work-Connected Injuries - **Section 342**
- California Department of Public Health. **Asthma-Safer Cleaning and Disinfecting**
- California Department of Public Health. **Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings**
- California Department of Public Health. **Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis**
- California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. **Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Resources for Employers and Workers**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **What Construction Workers Need to Know about COVID-19**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **How It Spreads**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **Symptoms**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease. **Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance)**
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): **Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility**
- Federal OSHA: **COVID-19**
- Federal OSHA: **COVID-19 - Control and Prevention/Construction Work**
- Federal OSHA: **Protecting Workers Who Use Cleaning Chemicals**
- Los Angeles County: **COVID-19: What you need to know about cloth face coverings**
- New York Times: **How to Stop Touching Your Face**
- Ohio Department of Health. COVID-19 Information for Businesses and Employers: **Screening Employees for COVID-19**
- The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR): COVID-19 Resources (**English**), (**Spanish**)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: **Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2** (the virus that causes COVID-19)
- U.S. Department of Labor. **Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights**

Guidance Revision and Updates

- July 20, 2020: Added information on the use of face coverings as reflected in the June 18, **CDPH Face Covering Guidance**. Also added information on the government-sponsored leave benefits and Governor's Executive Order N-62-20.
- October 27, 2020: Updated criteria for when to return to work after a COVID-19 diagnosis, adding reference to **CDPH Guidance on Returning to Work or School Following COVID-19 Diagnosis**.