



Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19

MULTI-INDUSTRY CONSTRUCTION GUIDANCE

Introduction

Construction worksites, projects and companies are **not exempt** from Social/Physical Distancing Requirements, even if compliance means added cost. Hygiene protocols are **strictly required**. Moreover, people who are sick or at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 **must not travel to work, even if they work for a critical business**. This guidance clarifies how social and physical distancing requirements should be applied to the construction sector during the “Safer-at-Home” period, recognizing certain aspects of this workplace environment that make it unique from other sectors explicitly addressed in the Safer-at-Home public health order.

Social/physical distancing on construction worksites

Critical functions, including construction, work **MUST** comply with social/physical distancing requirements. The following practices are important for applying social distancing to a construction worksite setting:

- **Reduce size of work crews:** Teams should reduce the number of people in each work crew to the minimum number of people possible to perform the task safely, even if the reduction of crew size means the job takes longer.
- **Minimize interaction between work teams:** Even groups within the same project should avoid interaction across groups, to minimize possible viral spread if one worker contracts COVID-19. Approaches to avoiding contact between groups may include staggered shifts, compressed work weeks where different teams work different days, and maximizing geographic distance between different teams working on the same project.
- **Avoid contact with visitors:** Visitors outside the typical work crew should avoid interaction with the team wherever possible. For example, if an inspector or materials delivery needs to enter the site, they should alert the work team (e.g. by honking the horn of their vehicle twice or through another established communication means) so that the work team can vacate the site while the external parties are present.
- **Maintain a 6-foot distance between employees wherever possible:** Construction teams should make every effort to limit activities that cannot be performed within 6 feet of distance between workers. However, some core construction activities may require some proximity to complete (e.g., concrete pours, utility potholing, work in cranes, drainage pipe construction, among others). In these cases, construction crews must employ other aggressive measures to limit contact. Examples include requiring employees to face away from each other, the use of supplemental Personal

Protection Equipment (PPE) like face shields or respirators, minimizing the number of people on a team, and retaining consistency within work teams to limit contact with parties external to that team.

- **Office work should be done remotely, whenever possible:** Office functions associated with a project (e.g. accounting or records) should be done from home to the maximum extent practicable.
- **In-person meetings should be avoided:** Office meetings and consultations should take place virtually, with participants working from home or their work truck, whenever possible. If an in-person meeting is absolutely necessary, that must be limited to fewer than 10 people, and participants must maintain 6-foot distance at all times during the meetings. All surfaces should be wiped down before and after the meeting, and hand washing should also occur before and after the meeting.
- **Workers must not congregate during breaks:** Construction workers should not congregate for lunch or other breaks.
- **Activity specific work plans:** Contractors should consider all job activities and review how they can be accomplished using necessary physical distancing and sanitation protocols.

Hygiene protocols

Strict hygiene protocols must be utilized with all equipment and surface areas that are commonly touched. Operators of light and heavy duty equipment, specifically, must:

- **Clean commonly touched surfaces before and after operation:** *Cleaning*: refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection. Cleaning is typically performed using soap, detergents, cleansers and clean water before using a disinfecting method. Commonly touched surfaces, include but are not limited to: door handles and grab bars, instrument panels, steering wheels, devices such as cell phones;
- **Follow cleaning activities with an approved disinfectant:** refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Disinfecting is typically performed using approved commercial or household disinfecting solutions. For a list of CDC-approved disinfectants against viruses (including COVID-19 virus), see: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- **Use of personal protective equipment for hygiene and safety:** employees should wear all standard worksite personal protective equipment (PPE), especially eye protection and gloves, as well as other standard safety equipment (e.g. reflective vests or jackets). In addition, workers should wear a mask or cloth face covering at other times if consistent with OSHA and other applicable safety requirements. **PPE may not be shared between members of a work team.**

Monitoring employee health and avoiding travel for high-risk personnel

- It is critical that individuals DO NOT report to work while they are experiencing illness symptoms including fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, nausea, chills, or fatigue. If an employee does experience any of these symptoms, they will notify their

foreman or supervisor immediately so that appropriate follow-up actions can be taken. A screening tool for employees can be found on the [CDPHE COVID-19 resources web page](#).

- People at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are urged to stay in their **residence at all times** except as necessary to seek medical care. People who are sick must stay in their residence except as necessary to seek medical care and must not go to work, even at a **critical business**.
- **Any worker displaying possible COVID-19 symptoms may not participate in construction work.**
- Construction firms should implement symptom monitoring protocols (including workplace temperature monitoring and symptom screening questions) where possible. Best practice is to implement a temperature check station at the entrance to the construction site. If this is not practicable, employees will check for symptoms at home and report symptoms either electronically or on paper per the system created by the construction firm. Resources are available on the [CDPHE COVID-19 resources web page](#). Per the public health order, employers must retain the screening logs for at least 3 months and provide them to public health upon request.
- Individuals should also seek medical attention if they develop these symptoms by first calling their primary care provider or urgent care center.
- A sick employee must not return to work until they have been home for 10 days since symptom onset, are feeling better and are without a fever (without the help of medication) for 72 hours. A note from a medical provider is not necessary for returning to work if the employee meets these criteria.

Focus on the most necessary activities

- Not all construction activities are of equal urgency. Consider factors such as:
 - Whether the project is under construction already and thus requires active traffic management (in the case of a transportation project) or other work zone safety measures that benefit from ongoing activity;
 - Whether deferral of a start date on a project would undermine public safety or continuity of operations for critical infrastructure;
 - Whether the project can feasibly be done with social distancing measures as detailed above.
- **Consider deferring non-essential work:** All project sponsors, public and private, are encouraged to provide flexibility to construction contractors to enable them to delay work during the COVID-19 pandemic. For small projects, especially residential projects such as home renovations, businesses and homeowners are strongly encouraged to provide construction contractors with flexibility to defer work as necessary.
- **Safe shutdown of work:** When a project or project phase must be shut down due to the pandemic, care should be taken that the project site is left in a safe condition. Traffic control devices must continue to be inspected and maintained, so it is a best practice to minimize their need and use when a project is temporarily inactive.