

# COVID-19 Guidelines for Construction Sites – Operational Standards

As construction continues in many areas, and as construction is returning to operation, the concern must first be for construction site employee's health and well-being. The pandemic situation is fluid, and changing, often suddenly, as new information is learned about the virus and how it behaves. The risks of exposure and transmission for those employed outside the medical and healthcare sectors are still relatively low but evolution continues, according to OSHA.

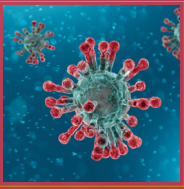
In addition to the current applicable OSHA Regulations for construction, this document provides guidance that is specific to addressing hazards associated with COVID-19. Owners, general contractors, and electrical contractors must all work together and communicate effectively to achieve and maintain adequate sanitation and implement an *Infectious Exposure Control Plan (ECP)* that specifically address the COVID-19 hazards. In addition to an ECP, appropriate and comprehensive *Risk Assessment Process (RAP)* should be performed. Often use of a *Respiratory Protection Plan (RPP)* must be used to attain minimum compliance with OSHA regulations and CDC guidelines, even interim guidelines. These actions can mean all the difference between continuing construction operations or a mandatory shut-down of a project. NECA has developed thorough checklists and templates that can assist contractors with meeting all three of these requirements.

It is vital contractors understand that the OSHA requirements, CDC Guidelines, and information from the World Health Organization (WHO) are in a rapid response mode to the dynamics of the pandemic. The rules and recommendations are subject to changes specific to subsequent findings and information provided by authorities. The guidelines in this document are specific to establishing *minimum standards* for construction sites to specifically address and respond to the hazards of COVID-19. These guidelines do not address contract obligations or insurance coverages. OSHA has published Guidance for Workplaces on COVID-19 at [www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf). OSHA also issued Control and Guidance information for Workers and Employers which is available at [www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/).

## Construction Site Operational Essentials During COVID-19 Pandemic

Owners and construction contractors (including electrical contractors) must establish and maintain, as much as practical, a COVID-19 free construction project(s) through use of the following practical guidelines, which are non-inclusive. Each project should be managed separately to identify and address their unique aspects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Maintain a daily attendance log of all workers and limit suppliers, vendors and visitors to a designated area away from other employees working on the job. No un-authorized visitors will be allowed on the project.
2. Establish strict COVID-19 screening processes and construction site access security including required testing, where practical, and medical evidence that employees are not infected with COVID-19. This could be a written evidence from a medical professional, etc.
3. Provide proper signage from CDC, WHO, OSHA related to proper hygiene and proper hand washing techniques. Provide training and guidance as required.
4. It has been recommended to designate a site supervisor dedicated to monitoring COVID-19 issues and provide additional information to workers as needed.
5. Develop, review and implement an overall infectious control measure policy and protocols for all employees to review and adhere too. This can include specific personal protective equipment, handwashing guidelines and disinfecting/housekeeping responsibilities.
6. Remind employees of Sick leave policies, Family Medical Leave Act, Customer Workplace regulations and other company policies that may affect each worker. Remind workers of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) that may be available to them during times of crisis and encourage them to use these resources that available.



7. Determine areas where workers may be at risk of close proximity like stairwells, break rooms, material trailers and develop plans to minimize interactions between employees.
8. Rotating trades in jobsite areas and providing additional shift work opportunities may also work to keep workers at the required social distancing (6-foot separation) rule currently in place.
9. Implement the Hierarchy of Controls per OSHA regulations including Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls, Safe Work Practices, Use of Appropriate PPE.
10. Provide employees with all necessary PPE such as gloves, goggles, face coverings/face masks as required for the activity and any exposure.
  - ◆ Personal protective equipment should be assigned to an individual, not shared among groups.
  - ◆ Companies should consider implementing a 100% glove use policy.
  - ◆ Respiratory protection should be in accordance with the company RPP
  - ◆ N-95 Respirators should be used by medical and healthcare workers, medical first responders and other with direct exposure possibilities. N95 and equivalent masks should be reserved for those requiring that level of PPE, such as medical and health care workers directly exposed to COVID-19 hazards. See the CDC guidance on appropriate face coverings. Follow all respirator program requirements. Visit [www.necanet.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/coronavirussafety\\_respiratorsfacemasks.pdf?sfvrsn=](http://www.necanet.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/coronavirussafety_respiratorsfacemasks.pdf?sfvrsn=)
11. Provide portable hand wash stations and/or hand sanitizing lotion at multiple locations around the jobsite and workplace to encourage and promote proper hygiene and virus spread control measures.
12. Encourage workers to stay home if they show any signs of illness and seek medical help as needed.
13. If appropriate, allow for flexible workhours and other measures that could limit employee interaction.

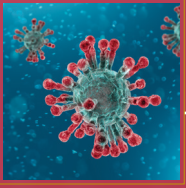
### Specific COVID-19 Training and Education

1. Provide training for supervisors, employees and other key personnel to recognize signs and symptoms of COVID-19 as recommended at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html).
2. Schedule regular daily briefings or jobsite safety talks to communicate the news concerning the virus/project, etc. and to visually assess your crew.
3. During project safety talks, remind employees to keep 6 feet of personal space if possible.
4. Communicate a current fit-for-duty policy, including the requirement to provide a return-to-work authorization form if seen by a physician.

### COVID-19 Safety Policies and Practices for Workers

The following recommendations are specific to construction projects that continue to be operational. While these are fairly comprehensive, they are not all-inclusive. The needs of each site can vary. State or other local requirements can be more restrictive and would take precedent.

1. While on the jobsite, always practice social distancing by maintaining a minimum 6-foot distance from others. Avoid gatherings or operations that require two or more people in close proximity.
2. Create a social distancing protocol where appropriate and also limit worker interactions with other trades and personnel to a minimum.
3. Washing with warm water and soap for 20 seconds or using an alcohol based, evaporating disinfecting lotion will deter the spread of viruses to others.
4. A good practice is to not share tools and devices such as cellphones, smart tablets, desks, offices, work tools and equipment. If tools or equipment must be shared, ensure all cleaning protocols have been followed for proper disinfection.



5. Workers should wear disposable gloves while wiping down all tools before storing or at the end of every shift.
6. Allow only 1 person per aerial lift bucket, scaffold platform or other confined area to maintain appropriate space separation.
7. Suspend or postpone work requiring 2 or more people in close proximity.
8. Use full body PPE (health related in addition to other hazards identified in risk assessment) in situations where work involving 2 or more workers in close proximity must take place.
9. Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, common work area and tables, tools, desks, cell phones and any other item(s) that could be shared.
10. Use approved cleaning chemicals and follow all label and SDS requirements and manufacturer's instructions

CDC guidance on Social Distancing: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html)

### Recommendations for Workers with Symptoms

1. Employees should refrain from coming to work if they are feeling ill or showing any signs of illness or respiratory distress.
2. Notify the construction management team of the onset of illness.
3. Employees should inform their supervisor if they have been around a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or if a family member at home has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is showing signs or symptoms.
4. Employees should self-quarantine at home to protect safety of others on the jobsite.
5. Employees should avoid contact with persons known to be sick.
6. Employees should not shake hands and avoid making physical contact when greeting others

## USEFUL RESOURCES

### NECA COVID-19 Resource Center

[www.necanet.org/industry-priorities/safety-regulations/neca-coronavirus-resource-center](http://www.necanet.org/industry-priorities/safety-regulations/neca-coronavirus-resource-center)

### CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html)