



PENNSYLVANIA'S COVID-19 PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION

Recommended Safety & Health Response Plan for COVID-19 Exposure Mitigation

Published by the General Contractors Association of Pennsylvania, with a lead role by the Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania, the following is designed to assist construction projects with implementing an effective COVID-19 response plan for their jobsites. This information is based on current understanding as of the effective date of this plan and may need to be updated as our knowledge and understanding evolves.

What Must Employers Do?

- Identify a "Pandemic Safety Officer" for each project or work site, or, if a large-scale construction project, then for each contractor at the site.
 - The primary responsibility of the Pandemic Safety Officer will be to convey, implement, and enforce the social distancing and other requirements of this guidance for the protection of employees, suppliers, and other personnel at the site.
- Follow all applicable provisions of the [Order](#) of the Secretary of Health providing for business safety measures, issued April 15, 2020, including but not limited to provisions requiring that every person present at a work site wear masks/face coverings, and provisions requiring the establishment of protocols for execution upon discovery that the business has been exposed to a person who is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Follow all applicable provisions of the [Order](#) of the Secretary of Health providing for building safety measures, issued April 5, 2020.

- Follow other applicable [Department of Health \(DOH\)](#) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [guidance](#).
- Require social distancing (6-foot minimum distance between workers) unless the safety of the public or workers require deviation).
- Provide hand wash stations at appropriate locations on the site such as building entrances, break areas, food truck areas, offices, trailers, and job site egress areas.
 - Provide clean water and soap for workers to use several times a day. This may take the form of temporary water stations throughout the jobsite.
 - If clean water and soap are not available, provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol. Ensure that stations 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 too strong.
 - Starting with common household bleach (5 percent strength), 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 plastic disposal bags.
 - Allow workers to go on break to wash their hands.
 - Mandate workers wash their hands after using the bathroom and before and after eating.
- Implement cleaning or sanitizing protocols at all construction sites and projects. Identify and regularly clean and disinfect areas that are at high risk for transmission (requirements to clean common areas and regularly trafficked spaces periodically).
- Ensure all gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people, maintaining 6-foot social distancing, when required to meet, even when conducted outside.
- Use virtual meetings and disseminate information electronically to the extent feasible.
- Stagger shifts, breaks, work areas and/or stacking of trades where feasible to minimize workers on site.
- Limit tool sharing and sanitize tools if they must be shared.
- Employ jobsite screening based on CDC guidance to determine if employees should work.
 - Ask the following questions:
 - In the last 14 days have you or anyone you have been in direct contact with had a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Have you, or anyone in your family, been in contact with a person that is in the process of being tested for COVID-19?
 - Have you traveled internationally, been on a cruise, or been to any domestic location categorized as Level 3 by the CDC in the last 14 days?
 - Have you had a fever of over 100.4 degrees in the last 72 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication?
 - Are you currently, or in the past 72 hours experienced coughing or shortness of breath?
- Prohibit from working any employees with any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Prohibit unnecessary visitors to any project or work site, and limit supplier deliveries.

- Limit access to enclosed spaces to the extent feasible.
 - Limited access 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.
- Ensure workers are traveling to and from the job site separately. Wherever possible employees should not share a vehicle.
- Educate employees on general precautions to take to limit the spread of COVID-19
- Require the use of masks per the PA Department of Health's order
- Reinforce the critical need for good hygiene practices
- Utilize work practices when feasible to limit the number of potentially exposed workers on the jobsite at one time. This may include:
 - Scheduling or rotating crew access to a designated area during a shift.
 - Stage the jobsite to stagger work and limit overlap of work crews.
 - Separate work areas
 - Provide temporary physical barriers to separate workers
- Perform a risk assessment of the jobsite
- Perform a task hazard analysis for each work activity
 - Include commonly anticipated safety hazards and how to eliminate them
 - Include potential COVID-19 exposures and how to eliminate them
- 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 including safety or toolbox meetings.
- Create policies limiting delivery of materials and visits by third parties to the jobsite.
 - Do not permit, or severely limit, jobsite visitors in work areas and offices
- 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.
 - Morning Stretching and/or Toolbox Talk safety meetings to continue at a crew level while maintaining social distancing of 6 feet or more.
 - Do not hold meetings of more than 10 people.
 - Hold in-person meetings only when no other option exists, maintain social distancing and hold outside.
 - Eliminate community provided food (such as lunch buffets, donuts, candy dishes, etc.
 - Eliminate community coffee pots, water dispensers, and microwaves from break and other common areas.
 - Reconfigure break spaces to allow "social distancing" of 6 feet.
- Allow the voluntary use of N95 respirators.
- Create policies and practices that maintain physical distance between employees
- Identify and regularly clean and disinfect areas that are at high risk for transmission
- Disinfect all reusable supplies and equipment
- Clean surfaces of service/fleet vehicles
- Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Require sick workers to stay home and send sick workers home
 - Communicate policy

- Consider Using Jobsite Screening to determine if employees should work:
 - Temperature Checks
 - Have employees take temperature before leaving home and report results to their supervisor
 - Have qualified medical personnel perform temperature checks of each employees upon arrival
 - If an employee has an elevated temperature, then follow the initial jobsite Screen questions above to make a informed decision about the ability to work.
- When returning to work following a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case, all employees must undergo temperature checks

What Must Construction Workers Do?

- Maintain good workplace hygiene including hand washing practices and cough/sneeze etiquette
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and water isn't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
 - 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 on and off the job
 - Maintain a distance of at least six feet from other workers when possible
 - Do not shake hands when greeting others
 - 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
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not share tools (including phones, tablets, and computers)

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, doorknobs)
- Consider propping doors open to limit handle usage.

- Clean dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- 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:
 - [EPA Approved COVID-19 Cleaning Products](#)
 - follow the directions on the product you utilize pay particular attention to the required “wet dwell” time to kill the virus (usually 5-10 minutes)
 - 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).
 - For effective disinfection, diluted bleach should be used within 24 hours after preparation as decomposition increases with time if left unused.
- Workers performing this cleaning and disinfecting should:
 - Wear any required PPE. This may include N95 respirators, double disposable gloves, protective clothing, and eye protection.
 - Be trained on safe use, removal, 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.

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 fever or 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)

Should an employee, client, partner, subcontractor, vendor or site worker give notice of exposure or positive clinical testing of COVID-19 or influenza activity, the steps below are guidelines to follow:

Limited Exposure
<p>Example: Employee/Visitor/Other communicates that they, or a person they had direct contact with, has influenza/Covid-19 <u>symptoms</u>.</p> <p>Action: The employee will be immediately removed from the project.</p> <p>Result: 5-day self-quarantine. Continued or elevated symptoms will result in a transition to a 14-day self-quarantine.</p> <p>Return: Employee may return to work if they are symptom free or a medical certification is obtained clearing them of COVID-19.</p>
Moderate Exposure
<p>Example: Employee/Visitor/Other communicates that they had direct contact with a person offsite who is in the testing protocol for COVID-19.</p> <p>Action: The Moderate Exposure Employee will be immediately removed from the project.</p> <p>Result: 14-day self-quarantine of the potentially exposed employee.</p> <p>Return: Negative test result for the offsite person in question. The Moderate Exposed Employee may return to work.</p>
High Exposure
<p>Example: Employee/Visitor/Other communicates that they had direct contact with a person offsite who has tested positive for COVID-19.</p> <p>Action: The High Exposure Employee, and those who had direct contact with him/her, will be immediately removed from the project.</p> <p>Result: 14-day self-quarantine of the potentially exposed group.</p> <p>Return: Negative test result for the High Exposed Employee. Potential exposed group members may return if they are symptom free.</p>
Direct Exposure
<p>Example: Employee/Visitor/Other onsite who has tested positive for COVID-19.</p> <p>Actions: Temporary Closure. Minimal 3-day closure.</p> <p>Result: 14-day self-quarantine of all project employees. (Potential to return to site after 3 days with new employees)</p> <p>Return: Negative test result for the Direct Exposure Employee and the Moderate Exposure Group.</p>

Temporary Closure

- Notify employees of immediate work site closure and provide support to leave work calmly and safely.
- Employees should seek professional medical attention if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Employees must not return to work until contacted by leadership and given the all-clear to do so.
- Contact local health authorities for further investigation/testing.
- Communicate with all appropriate partners/vendors/clients/subcontractors/union halls regarding temporary work disruption.
- Communicate with employees regularly as necessary with important updates to ensure transparency and expectations.

Project Start-Up Following Temporary Closure

- Before work may begin again on a project certain actions should be considered.
- Jobsites must wait 24 hours, or as long as practical, before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Studies currently show that the Coronavirus can remain active on hard surfaces for up to 3 days. Specifically, life of the virus:
 - Up to 3 hours in aerosols
 - Up to 4 hours on copper
 - Up to 24 hours on cardboard
 - Up to 2-3 days on plastic
 - Up to 2-3 days on stainless steel
- The CDC has provided a list of products approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens and can be used during the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. A list of those products can be found [HERE](#)
 - The use and application of these products require specialized training for effective results. While you could acquire the skills needed and train your workforce, you should consider that this is a job that could be best performed by a specialty contractor.
- Upon completion of the decontamination process the following steps should be undertaken:
 - All non-infected, non-exposed, healthy employees are requested to return to work at the beginning of next workday provided they are symptom free. Use the CDC Initial Jobsite Screening to determine employee eligibility
 - Communicate expectations upon return to work.
 - Employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 must continue to stay home until released to work by a medical professional.
 - Employees in direct contact with any person testing positive must home quarantine for 14 days or until cleared by a medical professional.

RESOURCES

PA Guidance for Construction Industry [PA Guidance](#)

PA Department of Health [FAQ](#)

CDC – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers – [CDC Guidance](#)

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 [OSHA Guide](#)

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

ABOUT GCAP

Established in 1953, the General Contractors Association of Pennsylvania (GCAP) is an representing the memberships of General Building Contractors Association, Keystone Contractors Association and Master Builders' Association. Collectively, GCAP represents over 700-plus commercial construction companies throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For more information visit <https://generalcontractorsofpa.com/>.