

Design and Construction Industry COVID-19 Safety Guidelines



During these unprecedented circumstances, the key to navigating a world affected by the COVID-19 pandemic is consistent adherence to guidelines provided by medical experts. Below is compiled recommended guidance for design and construction industry professionals on job sites/in the field, in the office and in other areas where work is performed. This guidance has been taken from a variety of sources, including expertise from member firms, federal guidelines (CDC, OSHA), state guidelines (Office of the Governor), as well as from public agencies and key organizations essential to the design and construction industry.

The goal of this document is to share best practices related to protecting the health and safety of our workers, our colleagues and the public we interact with in our professional capacities. This document will be updated as new information and guidelines are shared. **While this document provides suggested guidance for our member organizations, it does not take the place of medical advice or governmental directives and decrees.**

For additional documentation supporting the suggested guidance below, visit the ACEC Ohio website by [clicking here](#).

Ongoing Measures

Items Common to Field, Job Site and Office

Staff Assessment:

- Each worker should complete and document a COVID-19 self-assessment and certify the following:
 - The worker's temperature is not above 100.4 degrees F.
 - The worker is not experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath)
 - The worker has not been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Employees who cannot certify all of the above or who develop symptoms (i.e. fever, cough, or shortness of breath) while at work should notify their supervisor immediately and return/stay home.
- Records of workers' daily self-assessment should be kept on file and handled as medical records appropriately.
- Revise orientation and onboarding process to include site-specific COVID-19 measures and protocol.
- Post and/or communicate COVID-19 exposure protocols where they are visible to all employees.

Exposure control:

- Identify and consult with a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for the technical aspects of COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.

- Identify the higher risk areas where workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work and the precautions that are being taken to prevent exposure:
 - See [OSHA COVID-19 webpage](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19) (osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19) for information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and guidance for employer, including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
 - Be aware some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.
- Employee/Family member confirmed cases:
 - If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, follow local health department procedures.
 - Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
 - Employees who are well but who have a family member at home that is sick with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and self-quarantine for 14 days or until the CDC-recommended guidelines are met.

□ **Returning to Work:**

- Workers should not return to work until all the following are true:
 - It has been at least seven days since symptoms started.
 - Worker never had fever or has not had a fever for the prior three days without use of fever-reducing drugs such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen.
 - Worker has documentation from a licensed healthcare professional that the worker is cleared to return to work.
 - Workers who have been exposed to sick co-workers should monitor themselves closely.

□ **Dealing with Employee Concerns**

- Designation of Human Resources manager, or other senior management, as a point person for employee concern specific to COVID-19.
- Discuss with staff the need to dampen discussions within the office or on the jobsite to help reduce dissemination of rumors, outdated or poor information
 - Too much focus on COVID-19 takes away from job focus, which, in turn, creates an alternate safety risk
 - Too much focus on COVID-19 reduces morale and raises anxiety levels
- Ensure Human Resources is consulted on any items that impact, or could impact, employee privacy rights
- Establish and communicate internal procedures to notify coordinator of any sick employees sent home with suspect symptoms.
- Identify local health department procedures and contact information for proper notification in the event anyone is confirmed to have COVID-19.

- Personal Protective Equipment
 - Provide training and/or written information on PPE guidelines specific to COVID-19, with an emphasis on limitations.
 - PPE must not be shared.

In the Field/On job sites

- **Information and education:**
 - Hold daily tailgate safety meetings that include COVID-19 safety measures with site workers before each shift.
 - Describe proper use of PPE
 - Describe proper disposal of PPE, such as gloves and masks
 - Proper use of PPE is NOT a substitute for maintaining distancing and other safe practices such as hand washing
 - Ensure project safety plan accounts for COVID-19 issues.
 - Ensure appropriate records of COVID-19 issues are maintained specific to the site (OFCC log) and handled/secured as medical records.

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE):**
 - Make personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies available for the project:
 - Gloves
 - Eye Protection
 - Masks or Face Coverings
 - Face Shields
 - If a mask is not part of routine PPE used for a specific task, workers should use a face covering if they cannot maintain at least six feet of distance between themselves and others.
 - Proper donning, doffing and disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves, is critical. Provide disposal via covered waste receptacles.
 - Provide signage for PPE disposal locations.

- **Physical Measures and Social distancing Considerations:**
 - Workers should comply with six-foot physical distancing.
 - Restrict vehicles to one person per vehicle whenever possible.
 - If physical distancing is not possible, PPE measures should be adhered to (i.e. cloth face covers).
 - Provide tools to help workers mark out physical distance spacing when performing job tasks.
 - Require that workers maintain a distance of six feet when waiting to enter hoists/elevators, stairs, and other shared spaces.
 - Advise workers to take stairs in lieu of hoists/elevators where possible.
 - Limit crew sizes to the minimum required to accomplish task(s).
 - Prevent workers from congregating during pre-shift meetings, toolbox talks and other similar gatherings.
 - Stagger schedules for job functions that put workers close together. For example, workers that perform job functions that are in close proximity can work different shifts or days, or they can have different start times and end times, including breakfast and lunch breaks.
 - Segregate crews from each other to reduce cross-exposure.
 - Make special assessment of small workspaces and use judgement for feasibility to continue work.

- Do not share tools whenever feasible, including accessories such as tablets, laptops, handheld radios and remote controllers. Prohibit workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, work tools and equipment. If tools must be shared, disinfect between uses.
 - No visitors should be allowed in project offices.
 - All progress meetings should be held via video conference or in spaces that permit adequate distancing.
 - Hands should be washed immediately after handling paperwork from vendors or contractors and the surface where they were viewed should be cleaned.
 - Consider erecting temporary barriers to keep workers separate during the workday.
- **Sanitizing and disinfection:**
- Ensure appropriate and sufficient sanitation and hygiene facilities and/or supplies are plentiful at all sites and in field vehicles:
 - Adequate supplies of soap/hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes/spray should be maintained.
 - Provide correct guidance on effective handwashing procedures. Soap and water preferred. Sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol for handwashing) used when no water source available.
 - Regularly clean and disinfect shared tools and equipment with item listed in EPA N List Disinfectant.
 - Make sure disinfectants are compatible with surface materials being sanitized.
 - If pool vehicles are used, instruct the driver to wipe down every touched surface in the vehicle frequently. The virus can survive for up to 72 hours on a surface.
- **Consider closing the site if physical distancing or alternative safety measures cannot be maintained.**

In Office

- **Access:**
- Access to the office is restricted and coordinated in advance with management if area is closed.

Administrative measures:

- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices.
- Consider policies and practices for social distancing (avoid large gatherings and maintaining six-foot distance from others when possible). Strategies that businesses could use include:
 - Implement flexible worksites (e.g. telework).
 - Implement flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts or alternating days between the office and telework, where feasible).
 - Increase physical space between employees.
 - Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g. drive through, partitions).
- Establish one-directional walking pathways where practical.
- Implement flexible meeting and travel options (e.g. postpone non-essential meetings or events).
- Consider delivering services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web).
- Consider delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Create process for handling incoming mail to minimize contact by employees. Block off conferencing areas that cannot accommodate the social distancing requirement.

- **Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:**
 - Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched common surfaces in the workplace, such as doorknobs, coffee machines, kitchen spigots, refrigerator handles, stairway handrails, etc. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water.
 - For disinfection, most common [EPA-registered](#) household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method and contact time, surface material interactions, etc.).
 - Provide disposable wipes or spray disinfectant where available so that commonly used surfaces, such as doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment,—can be wiped down by employees before and after each use.
 - Coordinate enhanced cleaning and disinfection following CDC recommendations after persons suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility.

Transportation

- Restrict ride sharing when possible and use alternative transportation options, such as rental cars
- Advise employees before traveling to make additional preparations:
 - Check the [CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices](#) (cdc.gov/travel/notices) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each state or country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from countries with travel advisories, and information for aircrew, can be found on the CDC website.
 - Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they must immediately notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.

Building Operations

General Procedures

- Make cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer readily available in common areas.
- Make cleaning and PPE disposal procedures and receptacles available.
- Establish and follow regular (i.e. daily) cleaning and disinfection protocol.
- Add touchless water fountains that run for 20 seconds in bathrooms, if possible.
- Add touchless soap dispensers in toilet and break areas, if possible.
- Inhibit use of communal or public water coolers or fountains or establish protocol to limit transfer of virus.
- Place trash cans near or outside door to facilitate use of towel to touch handles/door upon exit and then throw away.

Training, Education and Communication

- Communication to employees is a must.
- Employees need to understand their expectations and compliance.

Below is detailed information regarding masks and respirators.

Surgical Mask – These are typically loose-fitting, disposable masks that, per the FDA (<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks>) create a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and potential contaminants in the immediate environment. These types of masks can help if you are going out in public by providing limited protection from droplets when people cough or sneeze. (Note: Physical Distancing of 6 feet will also protect you from droplets.)

N-95/K-95/FFP3/FFP2 masks or respirators – Masks or respirators with specific ratings such as N-95 or KN-95 are designed and constructed to provide a specific, tested level of particulate filtering when worn correctly. Masks meeting these ratings are currently used by medical personnel treating patients with COVID-19. All but N-95's have been temporarily approved for use during this pandemic only.

*Self-made masks: These face coverings, often made from fabric, protect **others** from the spread of particles and droplet transmission from the wearer's exhalations, sneezes and coughs. Their primary role is to prevent the spread of virus **from** the wearer who may be unaware they are infected.*

ACEC Ohio Site Safety Guidance Checklist

- Guidance and education:**
 - Does site or office have written COVID 19 guidance and protocols? Y___ N___
 - Are daily talks/meetings held to address safety measures? Y___ N___
 - Is guidance posted for review by workers and visitors? Y___ N___
 - Are workers and visitors required to acknowledge guidance? Y___ N___
 - Are there record-keeping measures in place for COVID-19-related activity? Y___ N___
- Social distancing:**
 - Does site or office have space for correct levels of distancing with given staff level? Y___ N___
 - Is social distancing tracked and enforced? Y___ N___
 - Are there office or jobsite conditions that prevent social distancing or otherwise increase transmission risks, such as confined spaces, use of shared tools or machinery? Y___ N___
 - If Yes, please describe conditions: _____
 - If Yes, are there special measures being taken to protect workers? Y___ N___
- Personal hygiene:**
 - Does site or office have ready access to properly-equipped handwashing or sanitizing facilities? Y___ N___
- Cleaning and disinfecting measures:**
 - Does site or office have written cleaning and disinfecting protocol? Y___ N___
 - Does site have sanitizing products (sprays, wipes) available for use by workers and visitors? Y___ N___
 - What building, site or tool sanitizing measures are being taken? (Please attach information.)
- PPE requirements:**
 - Does site or office have written PPE requirements? Y___ N___
 - Does site offer PPE or require workers or visitors to provide their own? Provide PPE: Y/N_____
 - If Yes, please describe available PPE: _____
- Transportation:**
 - Are safe travel accommodations available for workers to practice social distancing? Y___ N___
 - If Yes, please describe: _____
- On-site screening for staff and visitors (screening checklist/questionnaire):**
 - Is there on-site screening for staff and visitors? Y___ N___