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FREE WEBINAR

OSHA Update for 2021

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OSHA-NAWIC Alliance

November 2020

Managing COVID-19 on the Construction Jobsite

For those of you who missed the October OSHA-NAWIC Alliance/Safety Committee webinar, COVID in Construction: Keep Calm and Carry On, I will summarize the information I presented and provide a few COVID resources.

To manage COVID-19 on the construction jobsite, it is important to create a written plan. Having a plan in place will protect employees, keep jobsites open and help prevent delays. When creating a plan, consider the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's

(NIOSH) Hierarchy of Hazard Controls (pictured left). NIOSH is OSHA's sister organization at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and their plan looks at the best ways to manage jobsite hazards with the most effective method at the top of the inverted pyramid and the least effective method at the bottom.

 The most effective method to control a job site hazard is to eliminate the hazard. This method is rarely practical on a construction jobsite. In fact, in a working paper published in 2020, the National Bureau of Economic Research identified industries in order of telework friendliness. Construction ranked the third least telework friendly after hospitality and retail. Simply put, construction workers must be on the jobsite in person to complete construction projects.

Below elimination is substitution. Thus far, no known substitutions for construction jobsites have been identified. Therefore, it will be important to include the other three methods of controlling hazards that, although less effective than elimination and substitution, will still protect construction workers on the jobsite.

Engineering Controls
Engineering controls are strategies designed to protect workers from hazardous conditions by placing a barrier between the worker and the hazard or by removing a hazardous substance through air ventilation. Engineering controls to consider when creating a COVID-19 jobsite plan include the following:

Control contamination pathways.

- Use open doors or kickplates to minimize the need to touch doorknobs.
- Use automatic features to open doors or run faucets.
- Eliminate or reduce shared tool use.
- Use wipeable or disposable covers for large equipment panels.

Ventilate.

- Open windows where possible.
- Use portable fans to improve airflow or portable negative air units to improve airflow <u>and</u> reduce contaminants.
- Update filter systems in job trailers and change settings to run at all times when occupied.

Consider hygiene measures.

- Install and maintain wash stations on jobsites.
- Install hand sanitizing stations or make sure ample hand sanitizer is available.
- Clean and maintain toilets.

Clean surfaces diligently.

- Assign responsibilities so cleaning is not overlooked.
- Use EPA-approved disinfectants. They can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19

Administrative Controls

Administrative controls are workplace policy, procedures, and practices that minimize the exposure of workers to risk conditions. First, a company must designate a qualified COVID-19 site safety person and then, as previously mentioned, develop a written COVID-19 control plan.

Screen employees to reduce sources of the COVID virus.

- Create a clear plan for employees who feel ill or believe they have been exposed to COVID-19. Train employees on the plan details and logistics.
- Screen employees pre-shift. Temperature checks and health questionnaires are the most common methods.
- Create a clear, written policy regarding face coverings.

Minimize site worker density.

- Reduce workers at a site.
- Avoid trade stacking and pace delivery times.
- Space arrival times, break times, and lunch times.
- Adjust size and frequency of meetings and trainings.
- Keep employees six feet apart to minimize exposure risk.
- Limit visitor access to jobsites.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is the least preferred and final option for reducing COVID risks, but still important. <mark>Cloth masks are NOT PPE</mark> but can help reduce COVID spread. Respirators continue to be required for certain job tasks as in the past but are not as available. NIOSH has a list of respirator substitutions if needed: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/RespSource.html

COVID-19 remains an ongoing hazard until a vaccine is developed. However, do not allow COVID-19 concerns to cause you to let your guard down towards other safety concerns. K**eep calm, AND <u>VIGILANT</u>, <mark>PLAN</mark>, and carry on!**

> **Two Free & Informative COVID-19 Resources:**
>
> The Center for Construction Research & Training's (CPWR) free step-by-step planning tool:
> https://www.covidcpwr.org
>
> OSHA's <u>Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19</u>.
> https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf