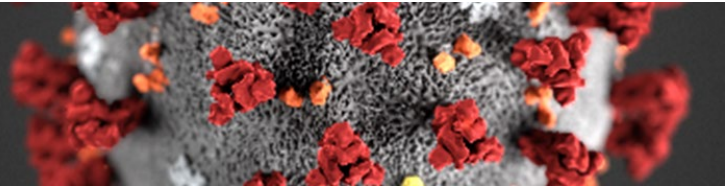


COVID-19 in the Construction Workplace



With all the information circulating our workplaces, it is important to know the latest information about the COVID-19 virus and how it could affect workplace safety.

OSHA and the CDC have released guidance for employers and employees to prevent workplace transmission.

Most U.S. Workers Remain at Low Risk of Exposure

At this time (March 17), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that, while COVID-19 poses a potentially serious public health threat, the risk to individuals is dependent on exposure. For most people in the United States, including most types of workers, the risk of infection with COVID-19 is currently low.

Workers Who May Have Exposure Risk

There is no evidence of widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States at this time. Without sustained human-to-human transmission, most American workers are not at significant risk of infection. Exposure risk may be elevated for some workers who interact with potentially infected travelers from abroad, including those involved in:

- Healthcare
- Deathcare
- Laboratories
- Airline operations
- Border protection
- Solid waste and wastewater management
- Travel to areas, including parts of China, where the virus is spreading

How does COVID-19 Spread?

Infected people can spread COVID-19 through their respiratory secretions via droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread. [According to the CDC](#), spread from person-to-person is most likely among close contacts (about 6 feet).

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Control and Prevention

OSHA has developed this interim guidance to help prevent worker exposure to COVID-19.

General guidance for all U.S. workers and employers

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is always a good practice to:

Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.

- Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Can COVID-19 become an OSHA Recordable?

In most construction sites, COVID-19 illnesses would not be considered recordable due to the difficulty in determining where the exposure occurred since construction is not one of the identified at-risk categories. COVID-19 can only be a recordable illness if a worker is infected as a result of performing their work-related duties if all the following are met:

1. The case is a confirmed case of COVID-19
2. The case is work-related, as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5; and
3. The case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7 (e.g. medical treatment beyond first-aid, days away from work).

Exception – Construction worker illnesses due to COVID-19 may become OSHA recordable if construction activities are taking place in hospitals, laboratories, or other facilities actively involved in treating confirmed cases of COVID-19. Extra levels of prevention controls would be required for workers in these environments.

Sources:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/index.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

COVID-19 Toolbox Safety Talk

Date: _____

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