

Construction Industry Tool Box Talk for Coronavirus/COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people

How does it spread?

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

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.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily the virus spreads

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

What are the Symptoms?

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.*

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

How do we protect ourselves and our co-workers?

- Wash Hands more thoroughly and more frequently
- Avoid person to person contact, i.e. greet people at meetings without personal contact/ No Hand Shakes
- Maintain good social distancing when possible, i.e. when delivering a tool box talk have everyone stand at least arms-length away from each other rather than clustered very close together.
- Cover your mouth with your elbow when sneezing or coughing
- Implement enhanced housekeeping. i.e. use anti-bacterial wipes frequently on common surfaces, door handles, stair railings, tools, steering wheels, etc.
- Try to use larger than necessary rooms for meetings to allow an empty chair between each attendee
- Limit groups to less than the CDC guideline of 10 people
- Avoid carpooling to jobsites & keep one operator per piece of equipment to the extent possible
- Do not share common water/Gatorade bottles, cups, food, etc.
- If you need to implement a respiratory protection policy at any job you must have a written policy and must make sure employees are medically cleared and fit tested.
- Keep yourself healthy- get adequate sleep, hydrate, eat a well-balanced diet, exercise, etc.
- If you do not feel well, specifically if you have fever, cough or shortness of breath, do not come to work and consult a medical professional via telephone.

What do I do if I think I have it?

- Isolate yourself from other people to the extent possible
- Contact your healthcare provider by phone, or Call 9-1-1 if your situation is serious
- Consult with your supervisor regarding new Federal & State laws which may apply to your particular situation.