



COVID-19: Construction reopening guidelines and best practices

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many companies to temporarily shut down, downsize or alter their operations. Work environments have been drastically affected and work as we know it, in some cases, has changed. Going forward, companies may have to restructure their workforces and implement new protocols to keep their employees safe.

As state and local governments implement their return-to-work plans and companies resume operations, employers will need to take into account the ever-changing orders, recommendations and guidance from their state and local authorities.

There is no single approach to returning to work. The following are some best practices that may help you reopen and/or continue towards normal operations, while protecting your employees and your business.

- Monitor local, state and federal public health communications and ensure compliance with industry- and location-specific requirements.
- Develop a pandemic response plan to ensure a framework is in place to create and implement policies, procedures, business continuity planning, and training to ensure employee safety. Appoint a pandemic response team (or designate safety committee responsibility) to assist in implementing your plan.
- Encourage workers to stay home if they are symptomatic or sick. Refer to CDC guidance on symptoms at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Develop a screening process or health assessment for employees when feasible (verbal screen, temperature readings, testing, personal protective equipment (PPE) checks, etc.).
- Train workers on proper respiratory etiquette (coughing, sneezing, etc.), hand hygiene and social distancing practices, including maintaining 6 feet of distance from co-workers.
- Provide additional hygiene opportunities (hand sanitizing) for employees.
- Conduct toolbox talks, progress meetings, etc. electronically, when possible. If not, ensure social distancing.
- Some employees may be required to wear face coverings when mandated by state or local rule, or when recommended social distancing cannot be maintained. The CDC criteria for face coverings are at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/diy-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>
- Establish flexible work hours, including staggered shifts and break times to limit employee exposure.
- Redesign or reposition work areas to ensure social distancing. If needed, place physical barriers between workers. Restrict access to the jobsite and work trailer to limit exposure.
- Develop a written jobsite cleaning and sanitation policy to ensure proper and thorough cleaning schedules are implemented. Be sure to use an EPA-approved disinfectant approved for use against coronavirus. For more information refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-buildingfacility.html>

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- Develop additional procedures to ensure cleaning and disinfecting frequently used tools and equipment and any reusable PPE. All frequently touched items such as door handles, telephones, etc. should be included, as well as high-traffic areas like job trailers, break areas, portable toilets, etc.
- Regarding OSHA recordability questions, refer to <https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-04-10/enforcement-guidance-recording-cases-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OSHA COVID-19 Overview, news & updates, hazard recognition, standards, medical information, and control & prevention.

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

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

OSHA COVID-19 Guidance for the Construction Workforce: OSHA Alert

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA4000.pdf>

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