



COVID-19 PROTOCOLS FOR CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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COVID-19 Protocols for Construction Industry

Transportation

Safe transportation to and from work poses the greatest challenge to local Bahamian Contractors. The current practice of overcrowded trucks hauling workers to work will have to change and more secure transportation such as:

- Traveling alone to the worksite in their personal vehicles
- Cycling wherever possible
- Ensuring that there is adequate parking to permit physical distancing
- Providing truck transfers with minimum number of personnel with adequate physical distancing

COVID-19 General Guidance for the Construction Industry

When working in the construction industry, the following tips can help reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus:

- Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick and call 511.
- Allow workers to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent them from spreading the virus.
- Establish a new process for employees to enter the job site including hand-washing stations and the possibility of temperature tracking on arrival and departure.
- Continue to use other normal control measures, including personal protective equipment (PPE), necessary to protect workers from other job hazards associated with construction activities.
- Advise workers to avoid physical contact with others and direct employees/contractors/visitors to increase personal space to at least six feet, where possible.
- Where work trailers are used, all workers should maintain physical distancing while inside the trailers. Some reorganization of workspace may be required in order to ensure compliance.
- Train workers how to properly put on, use/wear, and take off protective clothing and equipment and how to properly dispose of them.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Promote personal hygiene. If workers do not have immediate access to soap and water for handwashing, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Discourage the sharing of tools. To the extent tools or equipment must be shared, provide, and instruct workers to use alcohol-based wipes to clean tools before and after use. When cleaning tools and equipment, workers should consult manufacturer recommendations for proper cleaning techniques and restrictions.

- Keep in-person meetings (including toolbox talks and safety meetings) as short as possible, limit the number of workers in attendance, and use physical distancing practices.
- Clean and disinfect portable jobsite toilets regularly. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be filled regularly. Frequently touched items (i.e., door pulls and toilet seats) should be disinfected.
 - Toilets are to be cleaned not less than 3 times per 8-hour shift
 - Handrails & doorknobs 3 times per 8-hour shift
 - Break areas and lunch tables 3 times per 8-hour shift
- Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.
- Increase safety surveillance on the job site.
- Pre-determine how sick or injured employees will be transported to the nearest clinic or hospital.

Communication to Staff

Contractors should, as a part of their revised safety orientation, familiarize employees with the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and brief them on same.

Know the Symptoms of COVID-19

- Coughing, fever, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing.
- Early symptoms may include chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose. If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, DO NOT GO TO WORK, and call your health-care provider immediately. Do the same thing if you come into close contact with someone showing these symptoms.

Additional Employer Responsibilities

- Develop and communicate to all employees your COVID-19 Exposure Action Plan.
- Strongly promote a new culture of behavioral change on the worksite ensuring physical distancing of 6 feet.
- Post all emergency hotline numbers prominently on the site. Ensure workers know who to call.
- Ensure that NO employee leaves the worksite without specific permission.
- Post new signage relative to COVID-19 safety.
- Conduct safety meetings (toolbox talks) by phone if possible. If not, select an open space and instruct employees to maintain 6-feet between each other.
- The foreman/supervisor should take roll call verbally rather than having employees sign an attendance sheet. All attendance records should be kept by the employer and accessible to Ministry of Health Inspectors when requested.
- Access to the job site and work trailer will be limited to only those necessary for the work.

- All visitors should be pre-screened daily to ensure they are not exhibiting symptoms.
- Employees, contractors, and visitors will be asked to leave the job site and return home if they are showing symptoms.
- Provide hand sanitizer and maintain Safety Data Sheets of all disinfectants used on site.
- Provide, at no costs to the employee personal protective equipment (PPE) to any employees assigned cleaning/disinfecting tasks.
 - Masks
 - Gloves
 - Face shields/goggles
 - Rubber boots
- Establish a delivery protocol for all vendor deliveries and strictly manage the process while eliminating the need for physical contact.
- Increase supervisory surveillance to observe changes in employee behavior that may be due to his/her health.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has raised the stress level for many, as such employers must be prepared to; identify any changes in employee behavior, provide emotional, psychological assistance if/where needed.

Employee Responsibilities

- Become familiar with the Exposure Action Plan and follow all elements of the Plan.
- Adhere to the new procedures and ask questions if you do not understand them.
- Practice good hygiene: wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If these are not available, use alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, food, etc. with unwashed hands.
- When you arrive home, change your work clothes before entering your home, leaving boots, helmets, and other PPE outside or in a box or bin, separate from that of your family.
- Where possible, wash your clothes separately from your family clothing daily.

Cleaning/Disinfecting Job Sites and Other Protective Measures

- Clean and disinfect frequently used tools and equipment. This includes other elements of the job site where possible. Employees should regularly do the same in their assigned work areas.
 - i. Equipment such as fork lifts, tractors and such equipment should be wiped down between users.
 - ii. Employers will provide necessary disinfectant wipes/material to carry out this task.
- Clean shared spaces such as trailers and break/lunchrooms frequently during the day.
 - Lunchrooms and social spaces should be cleaned not less than 3 times per 8-hour shift. (microwaves, coffee machines, light switches, doorknobs, utensils)

- Machinery controls, control panels, should be cleaned at the end of each shift.
- Conference/Meeting Rooms should be cleaned after each use. (Tables, chairs, phones, AV equipment, laptops, keyboards, whiteboards, screens, light switches)
- Fixed restrooms with running water should be cleaned after each major break or at least 3 times per day per 8-hour shift. (countertops, sinks, faucets, urinals, toilets, stalls, doors light switches, soap dispensers, sanitary dispensers)
- Avoid sharing tools with co-workers. If not, disinfect before and after each use.
- Arrange for any portable job site toilets be thoroughly cleaned by the leasing company. Toilets should also serviced/replenished/vacuumed daily.
- Trash collected from the job site must be removed daily and trash bags changed every time trash is removed. Contractors will ensure that all trash is removed from the job site daily.
- Consider having a dedicated person to ensure continuous sanitation of the job site.

Additional Measures

- Contractors should carry out more frequent inspections of PPE gear to ensure employees are not using damaged equipment.
- Work site should be restricted to those with very specific duties to perform, **no non-essential visitors.**
- Seek to establish an approved lunch vendor (s) to limit the number of vendors catering to staff.
 - Licensed vendors
 - Vendors will adorn
 - iii. Gloves
 - iv. Face masks or shields
 - v. Protective clothing
 - vi. Head covers
 - vii. Provide prewrapped utensils
- Adopt a new work culture where the wearing of PPE is **not optional** for all staff, vendors, service providers and delivery personnel that may come to the site.
- Workers observed either not complying or refusing to take precautions should be suspended from the job site.
- Establish specific eating and rest areas and impose the physical distancing protocols.
- Encourage employees to clean up their own areas to avoid someone else handling their trash.
- Keep the dust down by using engineering and work practice controls, specifically using water delivery and dust collection systems.
- Sub-contractors coming to the site to operate specialty equipment, should be required to follow the same strict guidelines as site staff and should remain in or on their equipment while at work.
- The entire worksite where employees gather, should be completely and thoroughly washed at the end of each shift.
- Where possible, stagger work shifts to create overlap and lessen congestion.

- Use electronic payroll features to pay staff, where persons must receive cash, have pay envelopes prepared and allow one person at a time, to access the office to receive their pay. Handwashing should be required prior to entering the site trailer. Follow physical distancing protocols.

Self-Monitoring & Compliance Inspections

All Contractors are to implement an on-site self-monitoring mechanism at all sites and in the case of smaller sites.

The Department of Environmental Health Services and other Government agencies as applicable have the right to make periodic inspections of each site to ensure that there has been compliance with the protocols above. Construction sites which are not in compliance will be closed.

Contractors will keep a complete file of all safety protocols and make them available for necessary inspection by the Department of Environmental Health Services and other Government agencies as applicable.