



Construction Industry United in Fight Against COVID-19 While Delivering Critical Infrastructure

California Governor Gavin Newsom exhibited crucial leadership in implementing effective measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 in California while allowing for the delivery of critical infrastructure in the state. The construction industry is united in this effort, and hopeful that Governor Newsom's order is consistently implemented throughout California. Local agencies are doing their part to allow for necessary Public Works and Inspection staff to operate under modified circumstances – without this partnership, critical infrastructure projects would not be able to continue per the state order.

Likewise, the construction industry is taking extra steps to deliver essential infrastructure while protecting workers and the general public. The undersigned unions and construction associations are united in this effort and committed to implementing enhanced safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Background:

Beginning March 19, 2020, the California State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health is **ordering all individuals living in the state of California to stay home or at their place of residence**, in order to preserve and maintain public health to the maximum extent possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Information regarding this order is available here: <https://covid19.ca.gov>.

The order exempts those who are needed to maintain the continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors, including critical government services, schools, childcare, **and construction, including housing construction**. A list of the critical federal infrastructure sectors is available here: <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19> and a memo identifying the types of workers necessary for the 16 critical infrastructure is available here: <https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA-Guidance-on-Essential-Critical-Infrastructure-Workers-1-20-508c.pdf>.

COVID-19 Enhanced Safety Measures:

In all things, the health and safety of our workers and the general public must come first. For this reason, the construction industry is committed to implementing the following measures to defend against the COVID-19 pandemic:

Steps that everyone should take:

- Don't go to work if you are feeling sick;
- Don't shake hands when greeting others;
- Avoid large gatherings or meetings;
- Try to stay six feet away from others on job sites and in gatherings, meetings, and training sessions;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues if you cough or sneeze or do so into your Elbow;
- Avoid contact with sick people;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands;
- Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty;
- It is especially important to clean hands after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

Construction industry employers should also:

- Create at least 6 feet of space between workers by staging/staggering crews to prevent droplet spread;
- Plan for office staff to have the ability to work from home;
- Provide soap and running water on all jobsites for frequent handwashing. If that is impossible, provide hand sanitizer;
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces on job sites and in offices—such as hand rails, door knobs, and portable toilets—frequently, per CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>;

- If you work in healthcare facilities, train your workers in Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA). For information on CPWR's ICRA training program, visit:

<https://www.cpwr.com/training/infection-control-risk-assessment-icra>

Special guidance is available for older Americans and people with underlying health conditions:

- Older adults and those with underlying health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease are more at risk of becoming very sick from COVID-19. CDC has additional recommendations for these individuals here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

Additional links from our federal government partners:

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

From NIOSH: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html

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

From CDC for Employers about getting their businesses ready:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

Construction industry employers have taken it upon themselves to institute policies that seek to drastically mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 on the worksite, such as expanding onsite medical clinics, adjusting break schedules and setting up mobile facilities to add more distance between individuals onsite. Other steps employers have taken include:

- Screening through asking about COVID-19 symptoms and taking temperatures;
- Adding portable bathrooms and washing stations;
- Implementing alternate work schedules to promote social distancing and limit people on one shift from teams when possible;
- Setting up additional space with overflow mobile facilities;
- Pre-staging certain tools and materials ready for pickup;
- Disinfecting tools prior to check-in;
- Closing onsite cafeterias;
- Suspending onsite mass transit trams and shuttle buses;
- Limiting one person per transaction for tools and materials pickup.

Finally, many local unions and their signatory contractor associations have recently signed agreements ensuring that no adverse actions would be taken against construction workers that feel unsafe and do not wish to go to a job site, in particular stipulating that a member's request for a layoff and unemployment will be honored. We encourage all contractors and construction employers to act in accordance with the principles of such agreements, even if they have not yet signed one.

Our organizations are committed to implementing these measures, and more, to stop the spread of COVID-19 while delivering critical infrastructure in California.

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