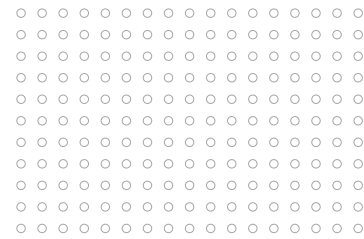


# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## Construction Industry Prevention & Control

A Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and subsequently spread to other nations including the USA and Canada. The situation presents a public health emergency and has been declared a pandemic with significant implications for communities and workplaces. Public health agencies in both countries continue to closely monitor the situation and issue frequent updates and guidance.

### State of the Industry

Construction is historically, not well vaccinated. In a study by NIOSH and the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, researchers found that the lowest rates of vaccination—less than 19 percent—were among workers in the construction industry. While no vaccine is currently available for the COVID-19 virus, vaccines for seasonal flu are and may help reduce illness in general.

In some sectors of the industry, where work is segmented or isolated, viruses such as the flu virus and COVID-19 are less quickly spread amongst employees. However, in sectors where individuals are working in close proximity, a virus can more easily spread.

Additionally, construction workers concerned about missing pay or losing their job are less likely to stay home when they are ill. A person may be infectious while experiencing mild symptoms. The action of going to work despite feeling unwell greatly increases the probability that a virus will spread to other workers at a given project.

### Transfer of the Virus

Infected individuals can spread COVID-19 through various methods:

1. Respiratory secretions, from a cough or sneeze may produce airborne droplets. These droplets can land in the mouth or nose of persons nearby or may be inhaled into the lungs.
2. Person-to-person among close contacts (about 6 feet). Person-to-person spread is thought to occur mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how influenza and other respiratory pathogens spread.
3. There is evidence 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 eyes.

# Center for Disease Control (CDC) Recommendations

## CDC Strategies for Minimizing Workplace Exposure

1. Encourage sick employees to stay home – if employees are showing symptoms they should get checked out by a healthcare professional.
2. Separate sick employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms – e.g.: cough, shortness of breath – upon arrival to work or who become sick during the day. They should be evaluated by a healthcare professional immediately.
3. Emphasize site sanitation and good personal hygiene practices including frequent hand washing, sneezing and coughing etiquette, and social distancing as much as practical.
4. Project housekeeping should be undertaken to start or increase routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, elevators, offices, radios, stair rails, etc. Use of suitable disposable wipes is encouraged.

## Tips for the Construction Employer

- Encourage good personal hygiene and provide additional hand sanitizer as well as hand washing stations in common areas.
- Warn employees about carpooling, crowded public transportation, and large gatherings. Avoid gatherings or areas where you cannot maintain space between people.
- Communicate and practice Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs)
  - Social distancing – keep 6' whenever possible
  - Avoiding personal contact (handshakes, touching, etc.)
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose & mouth
  - Wash hands frequently
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and then throw away the tissue.
  - Implement cleaning schedules for high touch surfaces / objects
- Limit visits with sales reps, vendors, and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties that may have traveled to areas where the virus is more prolific or if community transmission is occurring in the area.
  - See the global cases map from [John Hopkins CSSE](#) and International Areas with Sustained Transmission from the [CDC website](#).
- Consider more generous sick-day policies that will encourage persons to stay home if ill, particularly with the current state of the COVID-19 virus, but for the flu season, as well.
- Encourage employees to get vaccinated for known illness, such as seasonal flu.

## Additional Resources

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed programs to train incident managers and other stakeholders in preventing the spread of the virus.
  - Information on these WHO programs can be found at: [WHO-On-line Training](#).
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) has multiple topics, including “what you should know”, “Situation Updates”, and information for communities and travel guidance.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has guidance on [Control and Prevention](#) measures an employer can undertake.
- HUB International has setup a [Coronavirus Resource Center](#) which has additional guidance to mitigate business impacts.

## Summary

Following recognized practices to avoid exposures common to any respiratory virus will help to keep this threat in check. Proper planning can help protect both your employees and your business.

Please contact your HUB Service Team if you have any questions, need assistance, or would like additional information and resources.

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