COVID-19 and the Construction Industry

#KeepWorkersSafe

Tim Irving
US DOL OSHA

OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration
Disclaimer

THIS U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR OSHA PRESENTATION IS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL / EDUCATIONAL, NON-COMMERCIAL PURPOSES ONLY

SOME MATERIAL MAY BE SUBJECT TO COPYRIGHT AND TRADEMARK PROTECTION.

COPYING AND DISTRIBUTION OF SUCH MATERIAL IS NOT AUTHORIZED WITHOUT PERMISSION
OSHA’s Mission?

Prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths.
How many people work for OSHA?

2,173

People to make a positive impact on the lives and Safety and Health of our nation’s working men and women
OSHA at 50

- **50th anniversary of the OSH ACT**
- **Landmark legislation:** establishing OSHA and providing federal workplace safety and health protections.
OSHA at 50

- Occupational fatalities in 1970 were about 14,000 workers
- We have same hazards as 1970 – Struck by, caught in, electrical and falls
- The “goal”
  - Everyone goes home safe at night – and return healthy for the next shift
Today’s workplace?

Occupational fatalities in 2018 were about 5,250 workers
• Slip, trip and fall / 791
• Struck by object / 786
• Electrical contact / 174
• Transportation accidents / 2,080
• Death by Suicide / 304
• Unintentional Overdoses / 305

https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm
What is novel coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illness in people. Coronaviruses circulate among animals, including camels, cattle, and cats.

- SARS-CoV-2, the seventh known human coronavirus and the virus that causes COVID-19, is thought to have jumped species from animals to begin infecting humans.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Current pandemic

- More than 8 million cases worldwide.
- Different parts of the U.S. are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity.
- CDC reports 2,248,029 cases across 50 states, DC, PR, USVI, Guam and

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Current pandemic

- U.S. COVID-19 cases include:
  - Imported cases in travelers.
  - Cases among close contacts of a known case.
  - Community-acquired cases where the source of the infection is unknown.
- Most U.S. states are reporting community spread of COVID-19.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
COVID-19 typically causes mild respiratory illness, but can cause severe disease, including pneumonia-like illness (novel coronavirus-infected pneumonia or NCIP).

- Symptoms include: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

- Symptoms begin 2-14 days after exposure.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
How COVID-19 is spread

- **Person-to-person spread.**
  - COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from someone who is infected. People who are infected often—but not always—have symptoms of illness. People without symptoms are able to spread virus.

- **Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.**
If you have been exposed/infected

- Prior to seeking treatment, alert your healthcare provider or occupational health clinic if you think you may have COVID-19.

- Tell your healthcare provider if you have been exposed to someone with the virus and have signs/symptoms of infection, as well as about any recent travel to areas where COVID-19 is spreading.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Diagnosis and treatment

- Your healthcare provider can determine if you should be tested for COVID-19.

- There is no vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19.

- Some patients, especially those who become very ill, may require supportive care in a hospital.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus

Photo: CDC / Scott Housley
Protecting workers from risk of exposure to COVID-19

- OSHA is coordinating closely with CDC, including NIOSH, and other federal agencies to monitor the ongoing pandemic.

- OSHA’s message is clear:
  - Employers should have a plan for protecting workers and preventing further spread of disease, as well as maintaining the employer’s day-to-day functions.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Occupational exposure risks

- OSHA is closely coordinating with CDC, including NIOSH, and other agencies to monitor the ongoing pandemic.
- The risk of exposure in many workplaces likely reflects the risk to the general public in the community where the workplace is located.
- Risk increases when workers have frequent, close contact with the general public or other coworkers.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Workers in some sectors may have increased risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, including in:

- Healthcare and Laboratories
- Emergency response
- Mortuary services and other deathcare
- Airline operations
- Border protection and passenger screening
- Critical retail operations (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies)

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Workers in other sectors, including some in critical infrastructure, may be at risk because of frequent or long-duration contact with coworkers:

- Food processing (including meatpacking)
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Oil and gas
- Other sectors where workers would typically be within 6 feet of one another
OSHA guidance: Worker Exposure Risk

- Four exposure risk levels:
  - Lower (or caution)
  - Medium
  - High
  - Very high

- Most are likely in lower or medium exposure risk level
- Employers should carefully examine the specific risks in their workplaces and plan accordingly
- Workers’ risks in many industries may reflect the risk to the rest of the public in a particular community

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
## Construction Work Tasks and Associated Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower (caution)</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Tasks that allow employees to remain at least 6 feet apart and involve little contact with the public, visitors, or customers. Note: For activities in the lower (caution) risk category, OSHA's <em>Interim Guidance for Workers and Employers of Workers at Lower Risk of Exposure</em> may be most appropriate.</td>
<td>• Tasks that require workers to be within 6 feet of one another. • Tasks that require workers to be in close contact (within 6 feet) with customers, visitors, or members of the public.</td>
<td>• Entering an indoor work site occupied by people such as other workers, customers, or residents suspected of having or known to have COVID-19, including when an occupant of the site reports signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Note: Employers may consider delaying this work.</td>
<td>• Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks. Note: Most construction work tasks are associated with no more than high exposure risk; see the work tasks associated with lower, medium, or high risk on this chart.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Safe Work Practices

- Adopt staggered work schedules, e.g., provide alternating workdays or extra shifts, to reduce the total number of employees on a job site at any given time and to ensure physical distancing.
- Identify choke points where workers are forced to stand together, such as hallways, hoists and elevators, ingress and egress points, break areas, and buses, and implement policies to maintain social distancing.
- In elevators and personnel hoists, ensure 6 feet distance between passengers in all directions and equip operators with appropriate respiratory protection and other necessary PPE.
Safe Work Practices

- Coordinate site deliveries in line with the employer's minimal contact and cleaning protocols. Delivery personnel should remain in their vehicles if at all possible.
- Institute a rigorous housekeeping program to reduce dust levels on the job site.

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html
Safe Work Practices

- Keep in-person meetings (including toolbox talks and safety meetings) as short as possible, limit the number of workers in attendance, and use social distancing practices.
- Ensure clean toilet and handwashing facilities. Clean and disinfect portable job site toilets regularly. Fill hand sanitizer dispensers regularly. Disinfect frequently touched items (i.e., door pulls and toilet seats) regularly.
CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings as a protective measure in addition to social distancing (i.e., staying at least 6 feet away from others). Cloth face coverings may be especially important when social distancing is not possible or feasible based on working conditions.

Cloth face coverings are intended to protect other people—not the wearer.
Training topics

- Train all workers about their risk of occupational exposure to COVID-19 as well as on what to do if they have traveled to high-risk areas or been exposed to possible cases.
- Particular risk of occupational exposure to COVID-19
- Sources of exposure to the virus and hazards associated with that exposure.
- Appropriate ways to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure, including use of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Training topics

- Appropriate ways to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure, including use of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE.
- Some OSHA standards (e.g., BBP, PPE) require worker training.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
OSHA has developed a variety of guidance materials for workers and employers on how to stay healthy during the pandemic.

OSHA.gov/coronavirus includes information on implementing the hierarchy of controls when workers have specific exposure risks.
OSHA guidance

OSHA Alerts

- COVID-19 Guidance for the Construction Workforce
- COVID-19 Guidance for the Manufacturing Industry Workforce
- COVID-19 Guidance for the Package Delivery Workforce
- COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Workers
- Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
CDC/OSHA guidance

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks:

- Practice good and frequent hand hygiene.
- Follow good cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
OSHA enforcement

- Typically responds to emergencies, including disease outbreaks, in a technical assistance posture.
- Provides compliance assistance to employers to help ensure workers are protected.
- Provides technical assistance and support to other federal agencies, as well as state/local partners.
- Implemented interim enforcement plan for investigating COVID complaints, while ensuring the safety of workers, employers, and inspectors.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Existing OSHA standards protect workers from exposure

- Follow existing OSHA standards to help protect workers from exposure to SARS-CoV-2 and infection with COVID-19.

- Employers should also remember that OSHA can use the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to ensure that workers are protected from recognized safety and health hazards that may cause serious harm.

Relevant OSHA requirements

- Personal Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1926 and 1910 including:
  - Criteria for PPE (1926.95)
  - Safety Glasses (1926.102)
  - Respiratory Protection (1910.134/1926.103)
- Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030)
- Recordkeeping (29 CFR part 1904)

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
All of the enforcement memos are listed below:

All of the enforcement memos are listed below:

COVID-19 can be a recordable illness if a worker is infected as a result of performing their work-related duties. However, employers are only responsible for recording cases of COVID-19 if all of the following are met:

- The case is a confirmed case of COVID-19 (see CDC information on persons under investigation and presumptive positive and laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19);
- The case is work-related, as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5; and
- The case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7 (e.g., medical treatment beyond first-aid, days away from work).
OSHA guidance – recordkeeping exposures to COVID-19

- OSHA is providing enforcement discretion around recordkeeping for most sectors.
- Visit OSHA’s Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements page for more information.

www.osha.gov/coronavirus
Worker Rights

- All workers have the right to:
  - Raise a safety or health concern with their employer or OSHA, request personal protective equipment, or report a work-related injury or illness, including COVID-19.
  - Receive information and training on job hazards in their workplace.
Whistleblower Protections under the OSH Act

- Employers cannot retaliate (fire, lay off, demote, etc.) against employees for engaging in activity protected under the OSH Act.

- Protected activity includes:
  - Requesting personal protective equipment
  - Wearing personal protective equipment
  - Reporting a work-related injury or illness, including COVID-19, to an employer or OSHA
  - Reporting an unsafe condition to an employer or OSHA
  - Requesting guidance on workplace safety from an employer, OSHA, or other government entity
Every workplace should have a safety and health program that includes key elements to protect workers.

Good for workers and businesses’ bottom line

Targets small and medium-sized businesses

Safe + Sound Campaign

www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek
For continual updates

- Visit OSHA’s website to sign up to receive OSHA information:
  - QuickTakes biweekly newsletter (287,000+ subscribers)
  - Tip of the Day (33,700+ subscribers)
  - www.osha.gov/contactus

- Follow OSHA on social media
  - Twitter: @OSHA_DOL (21,500+ followers)
  - Facebook: Follow the Department of Labor page

www.osha.gov
Questions?

- Timothy Irving
  OSHA Directorate of Construction
  Email: irving.timothy@dol.gov
  Phone: 202-693-2495

- OSHA Directorate of Technical Support and Emergency Management
  Phone: 202-693-2300

www.osha.gov/coronavirus