

## SAFE WORK PRACTICE COVID-19 AND THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

The following document is a guide for employer's to use as a toolbox talk or safety meeting when discussing the COVID-19 virus with their worker's on a construction site.

According to the BC Center for Disease Control (CDC) a new coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory infections. It is vital for all employers' to provide information to their employees, how to protect themselves and their family and what to do if they suspect they may feel ill or sick.

### What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Cornona viruses are a family of viruses transmitted between humans and animals. The COVID-19 can cause illness ranging from a very mild, cold-like illness to a severe lung infection. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, and difficulty breathing (shortness of breath). The World Health Organization advises that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 10 to 14 days after being exposed.

### How is COVID-19 transmitted?

If a person carrying the virus sneezes, coughs or exhales, respiratory droplets are releases into the atmosphere and they may quickly land on nearby surfaces and/or another person. A worker may then touch contaminated surfaces or objects and then rub their eyes, nose, or mouth before washing.

The virus can be transmitted by:

- Breathing in droplets in the air that are generated when people cough or sneeze
- Close contact with other people (e.g. shaking hands or hugging)
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth, or food
- Touching a contaminated surface and then touch another surface may cause the virus to transfer from one surface to another.

Currently, according to health experts, the virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin.

### Key Prevention Steps



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Throw tissue in the trash.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK!**



## **What else can we do?**

The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.

To help reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or a tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Stay home if you feel you are sick and follow your employer's policy.

## **How to stop the spread of viruses on site:**

To prevent a disease or virus from spreading on site, take the following steps:

- Emphasize hand hygiene etiquette by all employees at toolbox talks and orientations – lead by example, put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensure that hand washing stations and alcohol base hand sanitizers are on site and available for all workers.
- All offices and non-porous tools are sanitized and cleaned regularly.
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Do not permit anyone to enter a worksite if;
  - They or a member of their household have travelled outside the country within the past 14 days
  - They or a member of their household have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
    - Symptoms include: (Fever, Cough, Difficulty Breathing, Sore throat, sneezing)
- Perform environmental routine cleanings.
- Plan to minimize exposure between employees and the public – follow social distancing procedures.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not share cups, glasses, dishes or cutlery.
- Have an alternative Level 3 kit available on site.
- Place informative posters telling people what to do if they get sick.

### **When should you get medical advice?**

If you have any symptoms, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or Public Health Authority. Describe your symptoms and travel history if applicable. Protect others from infection by washing your hands often and covering your mouth and nose, with your elbow, when coughing or sneezing.

You must stay home and self-isolate if your health care provider and/or a test has confirmed that you have COVID-19 and follow their instructions.

For more information go to:

The BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) has a toll-free phone line for up-to-date information about COVID-19 including travel advice, social distancing recommendations and access to federal and provincial support and services. It is open from 7:30 am to 8 pm 7 days a week. The number is 1-888-268-4319 (1-888-COVID19).

Information on COVID-19 guidance in BC is available on the BCCDC website at:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Health Canada also has a website with guidance on COVID-19 available at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>