Confronting COVID-19

Working in Construction During the Pandemic

Monday, April 27, 2:30 pm
Overview

This presentation provides information to help you consider the following:

- Hazards of working in construction during COVID-19
- Health and safety laws that apply to COVID-19 in construction
- Information, instruction and training
- Elements of a COVID-19 control plan
- Emergency procedures and reporting.
Transmission

- COVID-19 is transmitted person-to-person
- Infection appears to occur when virus enters eyes, nose or mouth
- Many infected people do not show symptoms, but can transmit the virus
- Being close to others (within 2 metres) is a potential exposure
Routes of transmission

- **Contact**
  - Touching a contaminated surface, or person then touching own eyes, nose, mouth

- **Inhalation**
  - Inhaling airborne droplets from another person
  - Usually a sneeze or cough
In close proximity

- On scaffolds, elevators, immediate work area
- Assisting another worker (e.g. holding something in place, lifting and carrying objects)
- Coffee truck, washrooms, eating and changing areas
- Muster points, toolbox talks
- Shared vehicles including carpooling
Contaminated surfaces

- **Equipment**
  - Forklift, skid steer, mini excavator, ladders, scaffolds, dollies, heaters, torches

- **Devices**
  - Rigging devices and hardware, lifelines, fixed anchors, bump lines, fencing, barriers, pylons, temporary anchors, other fall protection devices
Contaminated surfaces

- **Tools**
  - Hand tools, shovels, sledge hammers

- **Materials**
  - Wood, rebar, angle iron, silt fence, caution fencing, T-bar, stakes

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**
  - Harnesses, lanyards, rope grabs
What does the law say?

- **Occupational Health and Safety Act**
  - Employers and supervisors must take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker

- **The Regulation for Construction Projects**
  - Clean and sanitary washroom facilities
  - Facilities with hand washing capabilities
MOL CPO COVID-19 guidance

➢ Construction site health & safety during COVID-19
  – Comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations and public health directives issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health
  – COVID-19 construction best practices, communicating policies, on site sanitation, physical distancing, work scheduling, reporting illness

➢ Health and Safety Contact Centre at
  1-877-202-0008
COVID-19 control plan

- The most effective controls are “at the source”
  - Many sites have been shut down during covid-19 pandemic

- When controls at the source are not possible next best, but less effective method is “along the path”
  - Less effective because these controls don’t eliminate the hazard

- The least effective method is most usually “at the worker,” but sometimes necessary
  - Emergencies, temporary or used to supplement another control
  - (With COVID-19, “at the worker” hygiene absolutely necessary)
Along the path

- Reduce # of workers on site or in specific areas:
  - Cease non-essential work
  - Stagger/shorten shifts and lunch/breaks
  - Stagger work crew assignments.

Especially important for smaller sites and areas.
Along the path

- Social distance 2 metres or more
- Work from behind barriers
  - In closed operator cabs
  - Behind safety glass barriers
- Don’t share tools, equipment, materials
  - Assign a set of tools for each worker whenever possible
  - One operator for each piece of equipment
  - Only one person handles materials when possible
Along the path

- Clean and disinfect shared tools, equipment, materials
  - Need to both clean and disinfect to kill virus on surface
  - Do after use – before switching operators
  - Sanitize equipment at least twice a day when only one operator
At the worker

- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth, and especially before cleaning your hands.
- Not always easy!
At the worker

Hand hygiene

- Provide time for hand hygiene several times a day
- Practice hand hygiene immediately after removing gloves
- Wash hands with soap to remove virus from skin
- Rinse hands with running water to rinse virus off skin
- OR use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
At the worker

- Bring food and water bottles from home to the job site and do not share.
- Drive to worksites or parking areas by yourself
- Avoid carpooling
At the worker

- Safeguards for gloves to protect against other work hazards should consider whenever possible:
  - Safe storage when gloves not in use (i.e. plastic bag)
  - Daily cleaning
  - Instruction for proper removal
  - Hand washing or sanitizing before putting on and taking of gloves.

NOTE: Rubber nitrile gloves are not recommended by public health authorities for work outside health care. Only use as a last resort.
At the worker

Use masks/respirators **ONLY** if physical distancing not possible

- **N95 respirator**
  - Standard requires fitted and high-filtering masks

- **Surgical masks**
  - Blocks your droplets, will block some droplets from others, but is not high-filtering or fitted

- **Aside from N95s**
  - Your mask protects your co-worker, your co-worker’s mask protects you
Info, instruction and training

- COVID-19 control plan needs to be backed up with information, instruction and training
- COVID-19 training for all workers and supervisors
  - On all new COVID-19 procedures – distancing, cleaning and disinfecting and PPE
  - On making and using disinfectants – workers need WHMIS training and access to SDSs
Info, instruction and training

- Toolbox talks (while maintaining safe distance)
  - Daily reminders of COVID-19 safety procedures
  - Checking for signs of infection
  - Dealing with the public e.g. pedestrian traffic, traffic control, home owners, property managers
  - Working with outside workers e.g. engineers, inspectors, security, emergency services
Non-COVID-19 emergencies

- If an emergency situation arises – accident, fire, explosion or structure collapse
  - Rescue or responding workers must wear PPE
  - Other workers – avoid gathering, if you must, observe safe distancing
  - If an evacuation is required – maintain safe distance leaving the site and at muster point
COVID-19 emergency procedures

If a worker gets sick, they must leave the site immediately. For confirmed cases of COVID-19:

- Upon learning, close site using emergency evacuation while maintaining safe distancing
- Ensure other workers at the site are tested
  - Workers with positive tests must isolate
  - Must not be financially penalized for protecting others
Reporting measures

- Establish clear illness reporting and tracking measures.
- Employers must report all known work-related positive test results for COVID-19 to the Ministry of Labour (in writing) within four days, the joint health and safety representatives, and trade union (if applicable).
WHSC worker rights resources

WORKING DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

Your rights were never more important.

Learn more at
www.whsc.on.ca/Resources/For-Workers
Thank you! To learn more...