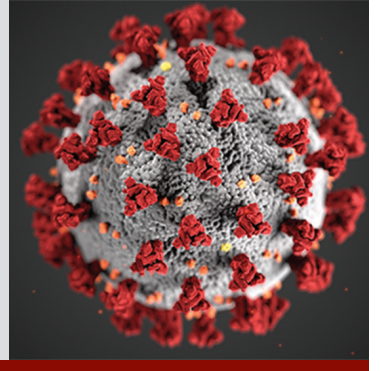


# Dealing with COVID-19 (coronavirus) in Construction



For the construction companies still at work, there are steps employers and workers can take to help stem the spread of coronavirus and keep workers safe and healthy.

## Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus

As of this date, Coronavirus is believed to spread from person to person, primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus is also believed to spread by people touching surfaces or objects and then touching one's mouth, nose, or possibly eyes.

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) does not currently require employers to have a written coronavirus disease prevention plan. L&I does require all employers to make their employees aware of the hazards associated with coronavirus and to provide prevention training as needed.

## Ideas for Social Distancing (more than 6 feet) on Construction Sites

- Stagger trades work and work shifts.
- Limit work to tasks that are strictly necessary with the goal of maintaining distance.
- Being closer than six feet momentarily is considered safe.
- Employers may need to schedule multiple smaller meetings for crews, including safety meetings, trainings and rest/lunch breaks with no more than 10 staff at any one time in one location.
- Hold meetings outdoors if possible.

- Prohibit large gatherings (currently no more than 10 people) on the job site.
- Establish a 'social distance monitor' – similar to a safety monitor but a person whose job it is to reinforce the six-foot distance.
- Ensure supervisors model ideal behavior.
- Use stairs instead of lifts or hoists when possible.
- One person in an elevator at a time.

## Employer Actions

- Require that sick workers stay at home or go home if they start to feel/look ill.
- Require handwashing just prior to eating food, drink, or using tobacco products.
- Promote frequent hand washing by setting up multiple locations.
- Ensure frequent re-supply of soap and running water on all jobsites.
- Implement regular cleaning at the site, particularly in common areas and touch points including:
  - Taps and washing facilities
  - Toilet flush and seats
  - Door handles and push plates
  - Hand rails on staircases and corridors
  - Lift and hoist controls
  - Machinery and equipment controls
  - Food preparation and eating surfaces
  - Telephone equipment
  - Key boards, photocopiers and other office equipment.



Division of Occupational Safety and Health



[www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health)



1-800-423-7233



Washington State Department of  
**Labor & Industries**

- [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

- Maintain Safety Data Sheets (SDS) of all disinfectants on site.
- Make sure written Accident Prevention Programs, Safety and Health Plans and policies are communicated to employees and are easily accessible.
- All types of PPE must be selected based upon the hazard to the worker.
- Provide workers with up-to-date education and training on coronavirus risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- Develop a procedure if a worker becomes ill while at work or if a worker notifies the employer they have become ill while not at work. (notify others etc.)
- Develop a procedure to discover if a worker is ill. Provide telework options for office staff when possible.

## Employee actions

- Don't go to work if you are feeling sick.
- Wash hands just prior to consumption of food, water, and tobacco.
- Don't shake hands or bump elbows with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissues if you cough or sneeze, or cough/sneeze into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Pay attention to official sources of information such as the CDC.
- Don't share tools (including phones, desks, etc.) or PPE.
- Don't share food with others on the jobsite until further notice.
- Appropriate PPE for jobsite hazards should be worn.

## Respirator Conservation

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) currently does not recommend healthy people wear respirators or facemasks for protection from coronavirus other than in healthcare settings.

L&I is aware that there is currently a shortage of N95 disposable respirators on the open market. Disposable half-face respirators are widely used in many industries when employers must provide a minimum level of respiratory protection. L&I respiratory protection rules still apply even though there may be a limited number of specific respirators available to buy. Employers must continue to provide and direct employees to wear respirators if required by the work. If respirators cannot be obtained, delaying the work until the appropriate type of respirator can be obtained and provided to employees is one option. In some circumstances using better controls, local exhaust ventilation, or dust suppression (such as wet methods) may reduce or eliminate the need for respirators. An N95 is the minimal level of respiratory protection. Especially when employees already have other respirators assigned for work, any other particulate respirator will be as protective. When giving a worker new respiratory protection they must be medically cleared and fit tested to wear the new respirator. All requirements of our respiratory protection standard WAC 296-842 can be found by visiting: [www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/rules-by-chapter/?chapter=842](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-rules/rules-by-chapter/?chapter=842)

Employers should reference the CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

Employers should check CDC recommendations frequently and update JHAs and safety plans accordingly.

## Additional links from our government partners:

From OSHA: [www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19)

From WA DOH: [www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus](http://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus)

From NIOSH: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019\\_ncov.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html)

## Get help

For a free safety and health consultation go to [www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyConsultants](http://www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyConsultants) or call 1-800-423-7233 or visit a local L&I office.

*This document was created in March 2020 and may be subject to change.*

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