MBA

COVID-19 Response
Employer Q&A

Updated 3/19/2020

Q: This is overwhelming. Where do I start?

A: Understanding the amount of information being put out and how rapidly the situation is changing can be a real challenge. You have to start by educating yourself and your employees.   There is certainly no shortage of sources, but everyone agrees that the best place is the CDC Website for Coronavirus COVID-19.

Q: What can I do on my jobsites?

A: Supply portable washing stations or hand sanitizers for workers. Frequent hand washing is one of the best ways to protect workers from exposure. Many projects, however, have limited access to running water. Portable stations with water containers should be placed on site to allow workers to wash their hands frequently. Portable stations can be rented from local suppliers or created by workers. In areas where portable stations are not practical, supply hand sanitizer for workers. Hand sanitizers should contain at least 60% alcohol.

Q: I'm renovating an occupied building. What should I do?

A: Separate construction workers from occupied building workers. To reduce exposure to possibly exposed or infected persons, implement procedures for minimizing contact between workers that don't usually work together. This may be a problem for jobsites where workers are in occupied buildings. Review with workers policies to keep them safe from exposure. Some policies may include separate bathroom facilities, isolating workers lunch and break areas, and limiting interactions with building employees.

Q: What about training and education I can offer?

A: Provide training and Toolbox Talks for your workforce. Information is the key to

protecting workers. Discuss with employees the hazards associated with coronavirus. Use informational bulletins circulated by the Centers for Disease Control CDC, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration OSHA, The National Safety Council NSC, and the World Health Organization WHO. Reference information from reputable sources, as some information you may find on the internet may be misleading or wrong.

Q: How about our work areas? Should we be doing anything there?

A: Disinfect high traffic areas frequently. For areas of high use, use disinfectants to keep areas clean. This includes, but is not limited to, break areas, lunch areas, and bathroom facilities. Job trailer doors and stair rails, meeting tables, and coffee stations should all be frequently cleaned using a bleach-based cleaner.

Q: One of my employees just reported they may have come in contact with someone with COVID-19?   Another is concerned they may be displaying symptoms. What should I do?

A: Most importantly, have those employees contact a medical professional for guidance.   Next, notify everyone on the project or office, that they may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. They also should contact a medical professional for guidance. At this point, most people will need to self-quarantine for up to 14 days. With medical guidance that period may be reduced to 5-6 days. Finally, it is time to stop all work on the project until such time you are certain the original exposure did not result in a positive COVID-19 test result. You will have to trace the reporting employee's whereabouts to determine who he or she may have come in contact with on the jobsite or even jobsites. This can be a particularly cumbersome job if the employee or another employee traveled between jobs.

Q: Everyone is healthy again. How do I clean the jobsite?

A: Please refer to the Cleaning / Disinfecting Q&A.

Q: If one of my employees is confirmed to have COVID-19 and is hospitalized, do I have to notify OSHA? And is this an OSHA recordable illness?

A: The key is to determine if the illness was contracted on the job. As the virus spreads throughout the community that is going to be next to impossible to determine. Most likely, it is not reportable or recordable, but a phone call to the OSHA office may be a good idea. 412-395-4903.

Q: Anything else people are doing that I should consider?

A: Some employers are asking their employees to take their temperature before coming to work. If they have a fever they are to stay home and begin self-quarantine if advised by a medical professional. Also, it is a good idea to hold a roll call each morning of your employees and your subcontractors' employees. You should contact any worker on the project who did not report that day to find out why they are not at work.

Q: I have a lot of employees who are working from home for the first time. How can I keep them productive, engaged, and safe?

A: This is certainly uncharted territory for many employees and employers. Here is some guidance one of our members has provided: Tips for Working at Home, courtesy of PJ Dick Incorporated.

Q: It looks like I need to shut my project down. What should I do?

A: Everyone needs to develop their own procedures to meet the unique needs of their situation. However, here is what one company has created: Coronavirus Construction Site Shutdown (PDF), courtesy of AECOM.

Q: Help! I need a written policy. Where can I get one?

A: Here is one that an MBA member helped to create: Infection Preparedness and Response Plan – COVID-19 (Microsoft Word Document Download)