



PUERTO RICO
BUILDERS
ASSOCIATION

Puerto Rico Builders Association Recommendations Regarding Construction Jobsite Safety and the COVID-19 Outbreak

MAY 1, 2020

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the specific mitigation strategies that our members as well as the Construction Industry in Puerto Rico should take to combat the COVID-19 outbreak. These strategies are derived from the CDC, OSHA and other organizations' workplace recommendations.

COVID-19

SYMPTOMS

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. There is currently no vaccine or treatment to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Employer Actions

- Develop a COVID-19 Exposure Action Plan.
- Workplace Coordinator – At each project site designate a workplace coordinator who is responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the project site.
- Modify jobsite communications, planning, and schedules to shrink or eliminate group gatherings. This includes minimizing or the elimination of pre-job conferences, communal break locations, and activity that would bring a group of people together on the jobsite.
- Address policies for material deliveries and other third-party jobsite visits.
- Provide COVID-19 information in Toolbox Talks. Reduce number of employees at Toolbox Talks to comply with Social Distancing Guidelines.
- Provide workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE) as a requisite prior to workers receiving authorization to enter the job site.

Communication and Awareness

At the entrance of the workplace and in other prominent areas, place signage with CDC recommendations.

Place posters that cover the following subjects:

- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Hand hygiene
- Control measures
- Workers expectations

Workers should know:

- When to stay away from the workplace
- Staying home when sick
- What action to take if they become unwell
- What symptoms to be concerned about



Remind workers they have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

Prevention Measures

Employers must implement control measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and all shall promote the following recommended practices for reducing the risk of transmission:

1. Screening

- Before entering the site, individuals must confirm that:



- They are not currently exhibiting flu-like symptoms such as fever, tiredness, coughing, or congestion.
 - They have not returned from travel within the past 14 days.
 - They have not been in contact with someone with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19.
- Each and every employee, supplier and visitor will have their temperature taken each day before entering the premises. Any person that has fever at or above 100.4°F/38°C or is exhibiting any flu-like symptoms, will be sent home immediately to undergo a 14-day self-isolation period.
 - Detailed tracking of worker's status on-site and off-site are kept at all time (e.g., fit to work, sick). A list of all quarantined workers is updated daily, with their privacy maintained.

Individuals who have been potentially exposed to the virus, or who are exhibiting flu-like symptoms such as fever, tiredness, coughing, or congestion are instructed to not come to work and stay at home for a 14 days isolation period. Such individuals should contact their healthcare provider or call the Department of Health COVID-19 Support Number 787.999.6202 for further instructions.

EMPLOYEE CAN RETURN TO WORK ONLY IF:



- They have had **NO** fever for at least **3** consecutive days without taking medication to reduce fever during that time; **AND**
- There is improvement in his respiratory symptoms (cough and shortness of breath); **AND**
- At least **14** days have passed since their symptoms began;

Note: Workers confirmed positive to COVID-19 must provide evidence of negative results of COVID-19 testing. For references visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>.

2. Social Distancing

Social distancing means that you should avoid close contact with people.

- Place signage about physical distancing around the work site.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding large groups and gatherings and maintaining a distance of 6 feet from other people whenever possible.
- Limit physical interactions between workers, clients, suppliers and other persons at the site and use other methods such as mobile phone or radio to communicate.
- Limit worker numbers on site where possible considering split shifts and reducing the number of tasks to be completed each day.
- Facilitate work from home, all non-essential individuals should stay at home.



- Create specific walkways through the construction site to maintain physical separation.
- Stagger meal times to limit the number of workers congregating in one area. Spread out furniture in break rooms.
- Stagger activities to reduce congregation, crowding.
- The number of in person meetings should be minimized, meeting rooms should identify the maximum safe capacity.
- Limit the number of workers in the hoist/lift at any one time.
- One-way staircases are established wherever practical to minimize worker contact.
- Conduct toolbox and other meetings in wide open spaces to enable workers to keep the required physical distance of at least 6 feet.

3. Workers Hygiene

As appropriate, all employers should implement good hygiene and infection control practices.

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid common physical greetings, such as handshakes.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- When coughing or sneezing:
 - Into a tissue or the bend of your arm.
 - Dispose tissues and wash your hands.
- Avoid from using share personal items such as phones or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently used tools and equipment on a regular basis. This includes other elements of the jobsite where possible.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, including all reusable PPE.
- Workers should wear face masks where required.
- Refrain from spitting at all times.

GOOD HYGIENE PRACTICES



**WASH YOUR HANDS
FREQUENTLY WITH SOAP
AND WATER FOR
20 SECONDS**



**AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR FACE**



**CLEAN AND DISINFECT
FREQUENTLY TOUCHED
SURFACES**



**AVOID CLOSE CONTACT
6 FT**

4. Construction Site Hygiene

The amount of time COVID-19 survives on objects and surfaces will vary. Environmental cleaning is one way to remove COVID-19 particles. Construction work inevitably requires regular touching of objects and surfaces.

- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment. When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, PPE).
- Instruct workers to wear gloves when cleaning and wash their hands thoroughly or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers before and after wearing gloves.
- Provide hand washing stations with a posted hand washing protocol, hand sanitizer stations, provision of disinfectant wiping products. These types of facilities are made available at site entries, exits, restrooms, eating areas, offices, and any other areas with commonly touched surfaces. If portable hand washing station with soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 70% alcohol.

- Restrooms facilities on construction sites should have adequate supplies for good hygiene, such as adequate supply of soap, water and toilet paper. Restroom facilities must be kept clean, properly stocked and in good working order.
- Limit access and use of shared devices like coffee machines, water fountains, microwave ovens, and similar. Means to clean and disinfect such devices between uses is provided.
- Encourage employees to bring their own lunch and consider eliminating truck where possible.
- Ensure all lunch trucks are utilizing servers for bulk food trays, no self-serve from food trays.
- Food items are to be individually wrapped when possible.
- Remove doors/door handles - Look at all reasonable opportunities to remove them.

5. Deliveries at Construction Sites

- Non-essential visits to the workplace should be cancelled or postponed.
- Minimize the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible.
- Delivery zones should be clearly identified and limited to receivers and delivers only.
- Deliveries and other contractors who need to attend the workplace should be given clear instructions of the requirements while they are on site.
- Make alcohol-based hand sanitizers available for workers after physically handling deliveries.
- Deliveries are unloaded solely by receivers using proper PPE, while delivers remain in their vehicles.
- Use, and ask deliveries and contractors to use, electronic paper work where possible, to minimize physical interaction.
- Where possible, set up alternatives to requiring signatures.



References

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employer to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19), dated 3/21/2020 or most recent version.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, "Steps All Employers Can Take to Reduce Workers' Risk of Exposure to SARS-CoV-2," OSHA 3990-03 2020.
- Ohio Construction Industry Announcement Regarding Jobsite Safety and the COVID-19 Outbreak – The Cleveland Building & Construction Trades Council and the Construction Employers Association.
- Safe Work Australia (SWA) Building and construction: Minimizing the risk from COVID-19.
- Canadian Construction Association (CCA) "COVID-19 – Standardized Protocols for All Canadian Construction Sites" Version 2, March 30, 2020.
- New York City Department of Buildings (NYC Buildings) Industry Best Practices for Physical Distancing Guidelines for Construction Sites.
- Department of Homeland Security – dhs.gov/coronavirus.

APPENDIX

CDC PRINT RESOURCES

Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Your symptoms can include the following:

Fever



If you have COVID-19, you may have mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.

Symptoms can appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Cough



Seek medical attention immediately if you or someone you love has **emergency warning signs**, including:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or not able to be woken
- Bluish lips or face

Shortness of breath



This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

How to Protect Yourself

KNOW HOW COVID-19 SPREADS



- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person.
 - » Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - » Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes.
 - » These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

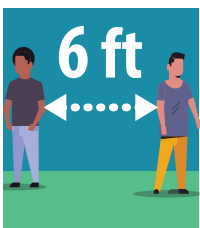
TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF



- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.



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



- Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community.



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10 things you can do to manage your COVID-19 symptoms at home

If you have possible or confirmed COVID-19:

1. **Stay home** from work and school. And stay away from other public places. If you must go out, avoid using any kind of public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.



2. **Monitor your symptoms** carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.



3. **Get rest and stay hydrated.**



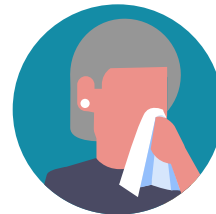
4. If you have a medical appointment, **call the healthcare provider** ahead of time and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19.



5. For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel** that you have or may have COVID-19.



6. **Cover your cough and sneezes.**



7. **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



8. As much as possible, **stay** in a specific room and **away from other people** in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you need to be around other people in or outside of the home, wear a facemask.



9. **Avoid sharing personal items** with other people in your household, like dishes, towels, and bedding.



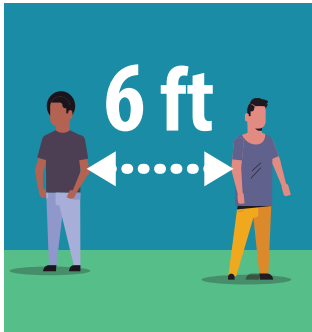
10. **Clean all surfaces** that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs. Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.



PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Social Distancing

Social distancing means that you should **avoid close contact** with healthy people. If you are sick, you can help stop the spread of disease by social distancing. If you are healthy, you can help prevent yourself from getting sick. Social distancing is recommended if Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spreading in your community. Local news media and your public health department will announce when the disease is spreading locally.

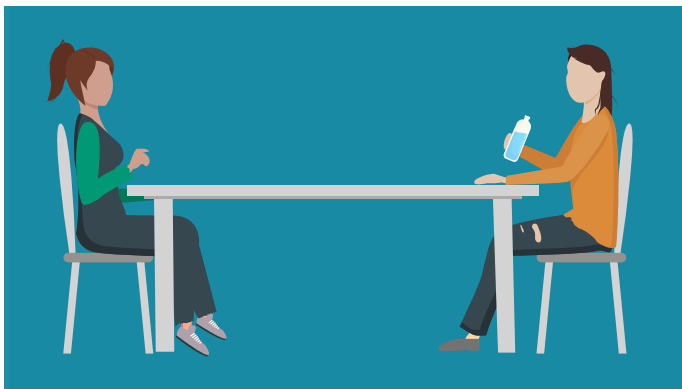


Stay about 6 feet, about two arm lengths, away from other people.

- » Avoid hugging and handshakes during this time.

Avoid big crowds when you can.

- » Sometimes this won't be possible.
- » If you need to be in a line or a group of people, try to keep about 6 feet of distance from them.



Find ways to maintain important connections with friends and family members even while staying physically apart



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Feeling Sick?

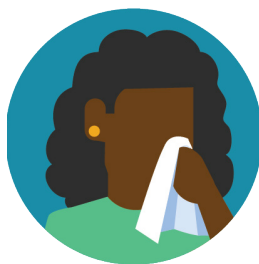
Stay home when you are sick!

If you feel unwell or have the following symptoms
please leave the building and contact your health care provider.
Then follow-up with your supervisor.

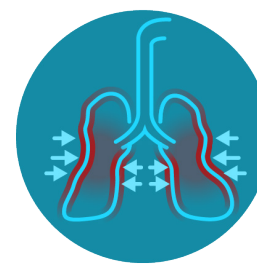
DO NOT ENTER if you have:



FEVER



COUGH



**SHORTNESS
OF BREATH**



[cdc.gov/CORONAVIRUS](https://www.cdc.gov/CORONAVIRUS)

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



When in public, wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



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Hands that look clean can still have icky germs!



WASH YOUR HANDS!



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention