

COVID-19 Control and Prevention Construction

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. TOSHA is committed to protecting the health and safety of Tennessee's workers and workplaces during these unprecedented times. The following information may help prevent workplace exposures to COVID-19.

While there is no specific TOSHA standard covering COVID-19 exposure, some TOSHA requirements may apply to preventing occupational exposure. Among the most relevant are:

- The General Duty Clause which requires employers to furnish to each worker "employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."
- The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards requiring the use gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection for specific job tasks.
- The Sanitation standards which require employers provide soap, hot and cold (or tepid) water, and individual towels/air blowers be made available in the workplace. The employer is required to permit employees to utilize toilet facilities as needed. In addition, it requires that all workplaces be kept clean to the extent that the nature of the work allows.

Failure to take reasonable actions, such as those listed below, may be a violation of the TOSH act.

The [TOSHA COVID-19](#) webpage offers information, guidance, and resources for employers and workers on the control and prevention of COVID-19 per the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Visit the CDC's page, [Resources for Business and Employers](#) frequently for more information as it is continually updated.

For most employers, protecting workers will depend on emphasizing basic infection prevention measures such as:

- Train Employees about steps they can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19
 - Employees should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Cover mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing, or use the inside of the elbow.
 - Discard of used tissues in the trash and immediately wash hands with soap and water.
 - Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to workplaces and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
 - Allow workers to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent them from spreading the virus.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects such as instrument panels, steering wheels, shared tools, etc. To disinfect, use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface. Provide disinfectant wipes in near proximity to commonly used surfaces
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Continue to use other normal control measures, including personal protective equipment (PPE), necessary to protect workers from other job hazards associated with construction activities
 - Do not share personal protective equipment.
 - Ensure used PPE is disposed of properly.
 - Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer's recommendation after each use.
 - Instruct wearers to wash hands after removing gloves.

- Promote Good Hygiene
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations. If soap and running water are not available, use alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer.
 - Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles. Identify specific locations and safety practices for daily trash.
 - Request additional/increased sanitization (disinfecting) of portable toilets.
 - Avoid cleaning techniques, such as using pressurized air or water sprays, that may result in the generation of bioaerosols if possible. If such techniques are necessary to the work, wear appropriate PPE such as a face shield.

- Promote Social Distancing
 - Consider the use of modified schedules, staggered shifts or arrival/departure times, and staggered break times and meals in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to promote social distancing.
 - Restricting access to confined areas (field office, control room, etc.) to only essential staff.
 - Do not permit employees to congregate in lunch or break areas; stagger lunch and break times.
 - Do not use a common water cooler. Use individual bottles or personal cooler.
 - If possible, limit stacking of trades to facilitate appropriate social distancing at the worksite.
 - When possible, perform meetings virtually or via conference call, or utilize multiple meetings in order to maintain social distancing. Do not circulate a sign-in sheet or mobile device and instead have designated person to sign in attendees. Do not host large group meetings or trainings until larger gatherings are advisable according to the CDC.
 - When possible, allow office or non-essential personnel to work remotely to limit the number of people at a worksite.
 - Sanitize work areas and wash hands immediately before and after completing the work.

- Documentation
 - If permitted, consider submitting required documentation (inspections, certifications, invoices, prevailing wage reports, etc.) electronically.
 - For documents requiring paper copies or wet signatures, consider drop boxes or other non-contact means to transfer paperwork between Contractor and Owner.
 - Utilize e-ticketing for truck weight tickets.

For additional information, or to report any safety and health concerns, visit www.tnosh.gov or call 1-800-249-8510.

