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COVID-19 CONSTRUCTION SITE JOB SAFETY STAND-DOWN

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The National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) continues its efforts to help "flatten the curve" of the spread of the COVID-19 virus and assist the homebuilding industry to enforce safety guidelines on all construction sites. To ensure that job sites are following CDC recommendations for job site safety, NAHB scheduled a national job site safety stand-down on April 16, 2020, during which time all safety guidelines are to be reviewed with job site personnel. This national job site stand-down is an opportunity, on a national level, to remind all employees and subcontractors about the safety steps that must be taken on job sites, safe work practices and protocols, company safety policies, and the role of all workers to ensure each other's safety.

In its guidance regarding the job site safety stand-down, NAHB recommends that construction companies stress the importance of disease transmission safety during a global pandemic and encourage all workers to follow basic infection prevention measures including (a) social distancing, (b) frequently washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; when soap and running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol, (c) cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, (d) avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth, and (e) notify your supervisor immediately and do not go to work if you are experiencing any symptom including fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Also, general job site practices should be outlined and reinforced during the job site safety stand-down including:

- Pre-Screen workers before entry into the job site by taking workers' temperature and assessing symptoms prior to starting work.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. 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. Workers should regularly clean and disinfect in their assigned work areas.
- Avoid sharing and using other workers' work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Clean and disinfect frequently used tools and equipment regularly.
- Clean shared spaces such as trailers and break/lunchrooms at least once per day.
- Arrange for any portable job site toilets to be cleaned by the leasing company and disinfected on the inside.
- Collect and remove trash from the job site frequently.
- Stagger workers' breaks, and no congregating in break rooks or break areas.
- In addition to regular PPE for workers engaged in various tasks (fall protection, hard hats, hearing protection), workers should also use the following PPE:

    (a) Gloves: Gloves should be worn at all times while on the job site. The type of glove worn should be appropriate to the task. If gloves are not typically required for the task, then any type of glove is acceptable, including latex gloves. Gloves should not be shared.
    (b) Eye Protection: Eye protection should be worn at all times while on-site.

(c) Masks: Facial coverings which snugly cover the face and mouth should be worn at all times while on the job site.

The construction industry has been designated as an essential business in many states. The industry must demonstrate to the community that safety standards are being followed and that everything is being done by the industry to ensure workers' health and safety. Any construction company that wishes to promote its participation in the job safety stand-down can use the tag #COVID19SafetyStandDown on social media.

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating rapidly-changing issues for businesses, and government aid processes and measures designed to assist businesses may also change materially from when this blog is issued. We therefore encourage you to monitor our website, review our future blogs and generally remain alert for additional updates or modifications to laws and regulations.

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