“Like it or not, we live in interesting times. They are times of danger and uncertainty; but they are also the most creative of any time in the history of mankind.”

- Robert F. Kennedy, June 6, 1966

There is no definitive playbook or set of rules for navigating successfully through the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has impacted every facet of our lives: our health, our education, and the myriad ways we interact with each other on a macro and micro level. The keys to navigating these “interesting” times are education, flexibility, persistence, communication, and good-faith. We have gathered in this document some of the most useful recommendations and guidance for design and construction industry professionals to implement in the spirit of those key concepts.

These materials have been compiled from a variety of sources, including member groups, public health authorities and regulatory agencies, and ACEC’s legal advisors. This document along with any updates and related information are available on the “Resources” section of the ACEC Indiana website. It is intended to help you think through and implement tailored plans for your organization’s operations, specifically those in Indiana. It is not legal advice and does not supersede or have any impact on any government orders.

I. Identify Your Team & Their Roles

Updates (and mandates) are being issued at a steady clip, and designated individuals need to be made responsible for monitoring it, disseminating it, and coordinating implementation and administration at all levels (and all worksites).

- Employees need to know who your COVID-19 “point persons” are, so they know to whom they can direct questions and suggestions.
- Someone needs to be responsible for ensuring your well-documented plans for cleaning equipment and workspaces are actually being carried out, and someone needs to ensure the many helpful (and free) posters available from public authorities reminding employees of proper behaviors and symptom reporting responsibilities are actually being posted in sensible locations.
- Specific individuals should be charged with obtaining and maintaining needed supplies of cleaning materials, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc., and installing or effectuating physical barriers (which may include spacing apart furniture and placing floor/ground markings).

Your designated coordinators need to be capable (both in terms of competency and availability workload) and kind – it does little good to deliver even thorough and accurate information to anxious employees if it’s delivered in a terse or disinterested manner.

Developed in partnership with our friends at

ACEC Indiana

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

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II. Identify & Utilize Quality Information Resources

Speaking of thorough and accurate information, your team needs to identify and regularly check credible, authoritative resources and incorporate new, relevant information into your dynamic workplace safety efforts. Key resources for employers and worksites in Indiana include:

- Indiana’s Coronavirus Homepage (especially the “Recent Public Updates” expandable/drop down display): [https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/index.htm](https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/index.htm)
- Back On Track Indiana: [backontrack.in.gov](http://backontrack.in.gov)
- Governor Holcomb’s Executive Orders: [https://www.in.gov/gov/2384.htm](https://www.in.gov/gov/2384.htm)
- Local Health Department Posts (accessible through Indiana State Department of Health’s state-wide map): [https://www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm](https://www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm)

III. Develop, Post, & Distribute Your Required Written COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Governor Holcomb’s May 1, 2020 Executive Order setting forth his “Roadmap to Reopen” sets forth numerous requirements for every business continuing or reopening Indiana operations. One of those requirements is developing a COVID-19 Mitigation Plan “to implement measures and institute safeguards to ensure a safe environment.” Plans must be posted “publicly,” provided to each employee, and address at least the following four elements:

1) Instituting an employee health screening process (e.g., asking employees if they’re experiencing symptoms and taking temperatures where feasible);
2) Employing enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols for the workplace, including regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces;
3) Enhancing the ability of employees, customers and clients to wash hands or take other personal hygiene measures such as use of hand sanitizer; and
4) Complying with social distancing requirements established by the CDC, including maintaining 6-foot social distancing when possible and/or employing other separation measures such as wearing face coverings or using barriers. Professional services and other office-based business employees are “strongly recommended” to wear face coverings.

HR SIDEBAR

Anything involving employees’ bodies implicates not only their health but also regulatory and practical concerns, all of which should be handled with thought and sensitivity (and, as needed, legal counsel).

- The Americans with Disabilities Act requires medical inquiries to be narrowly tailored and all medical information (verbal or written) to be maintained confidentially.
- Employees should be trained properly in safe and effective use of chemicals, and safety data sheets should be maintained appropriately.
- Different types of masks/face coverings implicate different OSHA standards.
- Require PPE as your workplace warrants. Employers must pay for mandatory PPE and typically fulfill other obligations related to training, disposal, and written hazard assessments.
Mitigation plans must be customized for each business, though all should review the State’s “General Guidelines for All Businesses.” [https://backontrack.in.gov/files/BackOnTrack-IN_IndustryGuidelines-Businesses.pdf](https://backontrack.in.gov/files/BackOnTrack-IN_IndustryGuidelines-Businesses.pdf). Indiana has collected and shared sample plans from various industries, including those in design and construction, and posted them here: [https://backontrack.in.gov/industryguidelines.htm](https://backontrack.in.gov/industryguidelines.htm).

In addition to whatever tailored content you place in your own plan, we recommend everyone include:

- The identity(ies) of your designated coordinators or point people, along with a statement that management welcomes questions and suggestions.
- A reminder that your plan sets out goals, not guarantees, and is necessarily subject to change.
- A statement that the plan does not impact at-will employment.
- An effective/version date.

**IV. Specific Ongoing Measures To Consider**

**Common Items**

- **Employee Assessments:**
  1. Each worker should complete – and where feasible document – a COVID-19 self-assessment prior to reporting to work through which each verifies that he or she:
     - Does not have a fever above 100.4 degrees F
     - Is not experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms (e.g., fever, cough or shortness of breath)
     - Has not been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days
  2. Where feasible, have a competent person conduct touchless temperature scans on employees and others arriving at the workplace.
  3. Employees who cannot pass required assessments or who develop symptoms at work should notify their supervisor immediately and return/stay home.
  4. Ensure supervisors are aware of COVID-19 symptoms, visually observing employees for symptoms throughout work shifts, and handling any associated communications discretely and professionally.
  5. Post and/or communicate COVID-19 assessment protocols where they are visible to all employees.

- **Exposure control:**
  1. Identify the higher risk areas where workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work and the precautions that can be taken to prevent exposure (referencing specific OSHA standards and resources).
  2. Be aware some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider how you can minimize those employees’ needs or opportunities for face-to-face contact and maximize their ability to

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**HR SIDEBAR**

Permissible employee health screening practices are limited and will become more limited over time.

- The Americans with Disabilities Act only permits inquiries about employee’s temperatures during periods when public health authorities have declared pandemic status.
- Generally, employers can only ask about pandemic illness symptoms.
- Do not forget confidentiality obligations.

**HR SIDEBAR**

Remember that multiple laws may entitle an employee to paid or unpaid leave in circumstances involving COVID-19.

**HR SIDEBAR**

Even well-intentioned acts based on unverified assumptions about an employee’s age or medical condition can create exposure to discrimination claims. Special assistance for medical conditions or age should be provided where it’s wanted, but not forced where it isn’t. Proceed with plans based on individualized input.
maintain appropriate distance from coworkers and others (or to telework if possible).

3. For confirmed cases:
   a. Report confirmed employee COVID-19 cases to your local health department and follow their directions and procedures. Place the employee off work, and ensure any legal leave entitlements are administered properly and consistently.
   b. Employees should not return to work until all applicable criteria to discontinue home isolation are satisfied (including those recommended by CDC, state and local health departments, and any applicable healthcare providers).
   c. Employees who are well but who have a family member at home that is sick with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and self-quarantine for 14 days or until public health authority guidelines are satisfied.

☐ Returning to Work:

1. Those who have been off work with a verified COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms of COVID-19 should not return to work until satisfying CDC’s applicable criteria. CDC has set forth different criteria for different scenarios, including for those who have experienced symptoms and those who have tested positive without experiencing symptoms. See https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html

2. Workers who have been exposed to sick co-workers should monitor themselves closely.

In The Field/On Job Sites

☐ Information and education:

1. Hold daily tailgate safety meetings that include COVID-19 safety measures with site workers before each shift.
   a. Describe proper use of PPE
   b. Describe proper disposal of PPE, such as gloves and masks
   c. Remind all that proper use of PPE is NOT a substitute for maintaining distancing and other safe practices such as hand washing

2. Ensure project safety plans account for COVID-19 mitigation measures and issues.

☐ Personal protective equipment:

1. Use best efforts to procure and make available PPE and related supplies appropriate for the project, e.g.:
   a. Gloves
   b. Eye Protection
   c. Masks or Face Coverings
   d. Face Shields

2. Permit (and make clear to employees that you permit) voluntary face coverings, including do-it-yourself (DIY) face coverings provided they do not themselves interfere with health or safety and do not have any inappropriate images.

3. Proper PPE donning, doffing and disposal is critical. Provide disposal via covered and lined waste receptacles (or sealable/tied plastic bags pending placement in receptacles).

4. Provide signage for PPE disposal locations.
Physical Measures and Social Distancing Considerations:

1. Workers should comply with six-foot physical distancing whenever possible. Use face coverings when not.
   a. Post/issue reminders instructing workers to maintain distancing when waiting to enter hoists/elevators, stairs, or other shared spaces.
   b. Encourage use of stairs over hoists/elevators.
   c. Prevent workers from congregating immediately before and after pre-shift meetings, toolbox talks and other similar gatherings (and maintain distancing and/or face coverings during such gatherings).

2. Restrict vehicles to one person per vehicle whenever possible.

3. Provide tools to help workers mark out physical distance spacing when performing job tasks.

4. Limit crew sizes to the minimum required to accomplish task(s) and segregate crews to reduce cross-exposure.

5. Stagger schedules for job functions that put workers close together. For example, workers that perform job functions that are in close proximity can work different shifts or days, or they can have different start times and end times, including breakfast and lunch breaks.

6. Make special assessments of smaller shared workspaces and use judgement as to feasibility of continued work.

7. Avoid sharing tools whenever feasible, including accessories such as tablets, laptops, handheld radios and remote controllers. Prohibit workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, offices, work tools and equipment. If tools must be shared, disinfect between uses.

8. Temporarily bar or limit visitors in project offices.

9. All progress and other meetings should be held via video conference or in spaces that permit adequate distancing.

10. Wash hands immediately after handling paperwork from vendors, contractors or other third parties. Keep viewing surfaces clean.

11. Consider erecting temporary barriers to keep workers separate during the workday.

Sanitizing and disinfection:

1. Ensure appropriate sanitation and hygiene facilities and/or supplies are available at all sites and in field vehicles:
   a. Maintain adequate supplies of soap/hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes/spray.
   b. Provide guidance on effective handwashing procedures, noting that soap and water is preferred. Sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol should be used when soap and water are unavailable.

2. Regularly clean and disinfect shared tools and equipment with products on the Environmental Protection Agency’s “List N”: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

3. Make sure disinfectants are compatible with and appropriate for the materials being sanitized. Not all types of surfaces or materials can or should be cleaned the same way. See guidance at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

4. If pool vehicles are used, instruct the driver to wipe down every touched surface in the vehicle frequently with disinfectant.

Consider closing particular sites if physical distancing or alternative safety measures cannot be maintained.
In The Office

- Determine whether particular offices or areas within offices should be closed, and – if so – ensure access is restricted and coordinated in advance.

- Implement flexible and supportive sick and childcare leave policies and practices.

- Consider policies and practices for social distancing (avoid large gatherings and maintaining six-foot distance from others when possible). Strategies that businesses could use include:
  1. Implement flexible worksites (e.g., telework).
  2. Implement flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts or alternating days between the office and telework, where feasible).
  3. Increase physical space between employees.
  4. Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g., acrylic glass partitions).
  5. Decrease chairs in conference rooms and provide floor markers or other indicators to facilitate distancing. Block off conference areas that cannot be rendered compliant with social distancing standards.

- Remove unnecessary interior doors or apply doorstops to keep them open.

- Establish one-way walking paths where practical.

- Implement flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events).

- Consider delivering services remotely (e.g., phone, video, or web).

- Consider delivering products or materials through curbside pick-up or delivery.

- Create processes for handling incoming mail to minimize contact by employees (and ensure required contact occurs with gloves or other precautions).

- Regulate food and liquid practices:
  1. Eliminate or otherwise limit use of communal or public water coolers or fountains as well as coffee makers, microwaves, or other shared appliances. Require users to clean appliances before and after use.
  2. Provide only disposable dishware and utensils.
  3. Require those who use common sinks to clean their own non-disposable dishes or utensils to clean the sink, counter, and handles immediately afterwards and to wash their hands after that.

- Install touchless soap dispensers and water faucets in restrooms and kitchens wherever feasible (and keep the soap dispensers filled).

- Perform routine and non-routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:
  1. Ensure cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, etc. are readily available in common areas.
  2. Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched common surfaces in the workplace, such as doorknobs, coffee machines, kitchen spigots, refrigerator handles, stairway handrails, etc. Understand the difference between cleaning (which removes germs) and disinfecting (which kills germs).
   a. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water.
b. Disinfection can be accomplished with most common EPA-registered household products. Follow manufacturer’s instructions regarding application method, concentration, contact time, surface material interactions, etc.

3. Provide disposable wipes or spray disinfectant where available so that commonly used surfaces, such as doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment,—can be wiped down by employees before and after use.

4. Ensure proper receptacles are available (and thoughtfully placed) for disposing of waste, used cleaning supplies, PPE, etc. Place trash cans near or outside restroom or other frequently used doors to facilitate use of paper towels or tissue to operate the door and then throw away once used.

5. Coordinate enhanced cleaning and disinfection following CDC recommendations after persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection have been in the facility.

Travel
- Restrict ride sharing when possible and use alternative transportation options, such as rental cars.
- Advise employees before traveling to make additional preparations. Check the CDC’s Traveler’s Health Notices (www.cdc.gov/travel/notices) for the latest guidance and recommendations for each destination state or country.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they must immediately notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed. Ensure employees returning to the worksite after travel are screened properly.

V. Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Robust and ongoing communication with employees is a must, not only to ensure all conduct themselves safely but to maintain a strong culture and sense of teamwork (and productivity!). Employees should know what management and others expect of them, and they should feel free to ask questions as needed.

- Establish clear protocols and channels for intra-company communications related to employees who are sent home due to COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms.
- Ensure Human Resources (and/or supervisors) understand existing leave and attendance policies and management’s options and decisions as to exceptions to those policies. Adopt “interim COVID-19” standards if needed. A host of specific legal requirements and general legal principles play into leave and attendance issues, and they vary depending on workforce size and geography as well as individual situations. Educated capable people need to be coordinating the company’s policy administration and handling of absences.
- Make clear that handshakes are no longer expected and should be avoided in the workplace. Each individual can choose from a wide variety of alternatives, and all should be mindful that declining someone’s handshake (or having your offered

HR SIDEBAR
There are numerous legal protections for employees who make requests or express concerns about workplace health and safety. Excessive negative discussion or fear-based conversations can present real morale problems, but management must avoid appearing hostile to legally protected workplace speech or conduct. Prohibiting or restricting employee discussion about COVID-19-related topics is risky.

- Managers who consistently and visibly demonstrate confidence, competence, and optimism.
- Fielding employee questions with visible patience and concern (as opposed to annoyance or frustration).
- Managers who are consistently physically/visibly present and accessible to employees (from an appropriate social distance).
- Verbally reminding or redirecting employees to focus on the task at hand (i.e., ensuring deadlines or qualify standards are met).
- Emphasizing that management/human resources are available and willing to discuss concerns with employees on an individual basis.
- Reminding employees of mitigation/safety measures being taken and PPE being made available and correcting any misimpressions about inadequacies or missing precautions.
handshake declined) is not rude. As a matter of good service and social grace, try to avoid visibly “recoiling” if someone offers a handshake or ventures closer to you than your comfort level. Try to respond with a genuine/natural smile or other polite expression coupled with a comment like “so glad we can get together – I’m avoiding handshakes” or “please don’t be offended – I’m going to move just a bit further this way.”

- Remember – and remind employees – that wearing a mask conceals an infinite number of conscious and subconscious facial cues. Clear *audible* communication and self-awareness is even more important when visual cues are unavailable.

- Share and keep in touch (figuratively) outside your organization! Touch base with industry colleagues and ACEC Indiana to brainstorm through particular challenges and share ideas and developments.