Colorado Safety Association – Novel Corona Virus Safety Bulletin

The news media is full of information about the spread of the novel corona virus, and the risk of contracting the disease associated with exposure, COVID-19. It is impossible to go anywhere without seeing signs that read “We are out of hand sanitizer”, and stores are selling out of products that can be used to clean or sanitize a work surface.

There is a host of information sources available to assist businesses with protecting workers, customers, and implementing policies to maintain operations during this challenging time. Most of the information centers around workers with ready access to hand washing facilities and restrooms. How do we protect people working in the construction trades and Gig economy workers where there is not easy access to adequate hand washing facilities?

Construction Industry

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires contractors to provide adequate handwashing facilities for workers who are handling chemicals or other hazardous materials. This rule is found in the 29 CFR 1926.51 – Sanitation standard. The language in the standard for handwashing facilities on jobsites is as follows:

1926.51(f)(1)

The employer shall provide adequate washing facilities for employees engaged in the application of paints, coating, herbicides, or insecticides, or in other operations where contaminants may be harmful to the employees. Such facilities shall be in near proximity to the worksite and shall be so equipped as to enable employees to remove such substances.

The construction industry can support workers on the job site by taking the following steps:

1. Provide handwashing stations on every job site, not just those with employees engaged in the application of paints, coating, herbicides, or insecticides, or in other operations where contaminants may be harmful to the employees.
2. Monitor portable toilet facilities to ensure adequate hand sanitizer is available.
3. Educate workers of the importance of handwashing, especially before eating or applying sunscreen or touching the face.
4. Encourage sick workers to stay home.
5. For more information:
   a. The Associated General Contractors (AGC) Coronavirus (COVID-19)
   b. The Associated Builders and Contractors Coronavirus Alert
   c. The National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) Coronavirus Preparedness
Gig Economy

Ride share drivers, food delivery, and other independent contractors face limited resources for paid time off in the face of an illness. If they don’t work, they don’t get paid. In addition, these workers are faced with limited access to hand washing facilities and restrooms over the course of the day. Here are some tips for protecting the health of these people:

1. Businesses can help this situation by providing access to restroom facilities for people making deliveries or dropping off and picking people up for transport.
2. Ensure workers have adequate breaks to use facilities that provide for handwashing.
3. Distribute personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to allow workers to clean vehicles and equipment used for delivery, or to transport passengers.
4. Provide adequate time for drivers to disinfect and clean vehicles.
5. Give rideshare drivers the option to decline to handle passenger luggage, or encourage the use of gloves before handling passenger items.

For a good resource on the subject, Lyft has issued a toolkit of resources.

Every industry will potentially be impacted by the pandemic. Employers and employees are encouraged to look at available resources and develop plans to maintain operations in the challenging times ahead. Here is a comprehensive list of resources that provide good information.

1. The OSHA COVID-19 Safety and Health Topics page
2. The Center for Disease Control Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers,
3. The Fisher Philips Legal Alert “Comprehensive And Updated FAQs For Employers On The COVID-19 Coronavirus”,

Colorado Safety Association (CSA)

CSA is taking steps to clean and sanitize our classrooms and computer lab equipment after every use. We have implemented a proactive class cancellation policy to accommodate moving registrants to a different class if they are unable to attend due to illness. We are asking that people with known exposure to an infected person, recent international travel, or symptoms of illness reschedule. CSA staff will not admit individuals with signs and symptoms of illness to our classrooms or computer lab. We are committed to assisting our members with information as this situation progresses.