



Landscape Industry Can Operate Safely, Protect Property & Environment, Support Agriculture & Community Mental & Physical Health

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Governor Jay Inslee:

Chief of Staff David Postman:

Executive Director of Legislative Affairs Drew Shirk:

Senior Policy Advisor of Natural Resources & Environment JT Austin:

Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association (WSNLA) thanks you for your strong and steady leadership, in these extraordinarily challenging times. And, we seek your help.

WSNLA believes our outdoor industry is low risk, prepared, and should be considered for PHASE I Re-Opening of Washington Businesses. Landscape related businesses include a wide variety of services from design and installation to maintenance and construction and range from solo operators to crew-based operations. Currently, landscaping is operating under the essential guidance limited to prevent spoliation, imminent damage, and emergency repair. Because of this, the businesses operating under The Governor's guidance have adapted the CDC guidelines for social distancing and sanitation and can be a model for industry best practices. Releasing these businesses to fully service their communities safely is a reasonable next step. To further support this, WSNLA has also collected shared best practices from State Associations across the country as landscaping has been widely deemed essential in virtually every state in our nation. ([Click here for a US map depicting state orders impacting our industry prepared by Nursery & Landscape Association Executives.](#) Source: <https://www.nlae.org/covid-19/>)

Springtime is an essential season for landscape services, releasing our prepared industry allows landscape professionals to protect valued property and the environment; support agriculture and food grown from home; and invest in their community's mental and physical health, including:

1. **Landscape Industry Can Operate Safely:** Landscape businesses operating under the guidance provided by The Governor are taking the required steps to implement CDC and OSHA guidelines and are taking the utmost care for sanitation and social distancing, protecting their employees, and eliminating contact with customers and the public. Many of these businesses also employ installation and construction teams and are well versed with the requirements needed to restart this arm of their operation.

Examples of Safety Precautions: Team training on COVID-19 Safety Guidelines; Crews drive separately to sites and/or plexi glass installed in vehicles; Sanitizing vehicles regularly; Management of any shared tools (ie: Wear gloves, Sanitizing regularly, or eliminating shared use); Handwashing regularly with sanitizer provided onsite; Wear masks or other face covering; 6 ft Social distance onsite, for breaks and lunches; Sanitize site before and after work (ie: gate latches, hoses, etc.) Staggering crew arrival & departure at landscape operations; Eliminating client contact; and Create employee daily health checks and policies in place for



confirmed cases. *(Please find shared industry best practices on page 3-4.)*

2. **Landscape Industry Protects Property & Environment:** Regular maintenance, including mowing, pruning, weeding, mulching are preventative environmentally-friendly strategies to ensure overall landscape health and also work to reduce the use of unnecessary pesticides. Because the landscape is a perishable asset, Springtime maintenance is essential as plant growth is occurring at its height. Allowing landscape professionals to fully service their clientele allows Washingtonian's to protect and invest in their residential and commercial assets.
3. **Landscape Industry Supports Agriculture & Food Being Grown At Home:** Allowing landscape professionals to install seasonal plantings of vegetables, flowers and shrubs supports the agricultural supply chain of nurseries cultivating food to be grown at home. The same greenhouses and productions nurseries that are growing vegetable and herbs starts also grow a vast selection of specialty nursery crops (flowers, shrubs, trees) that are perishable and grown for this season. To bring these crops to market can take multiple years of production and planning. Waiting will have catastrophic impacts for this segment of agriculture. Now is the time to plant, delaying to later in the year stresses plants and increases water needs for successful establishment.
4. **Landscape Industry Supports Mental & Physical Health:** Landscapes, including flowers and shrubs, support the mental and physical health of Washingtonian's throughout the state and increase the value of real property. Plants, trees and landscapes are proven to reduce stress, generate happiness and contribute to the economic health. Proper maintenance of trees and shrubs is proven to reduce crime and improve safety of communities. Allowing landscape professionals to fully service their clientele allows them to support the mental and physical health and safety of Washingtonian's while abiding the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order at home

Thank you for your consideration. The Landscape Industry stands with our elected officials and urges your support in releasing the landscape industry to serve their communities during this time.

Warmly,

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Shared Industry Best Practices for Landscape Professionals During COVID-19 Pandemic:

If you are providing services under The Governor's guidance language, you are required to develop a COVID-19 Business Safety Plan implementing required CDC and OSHA guidelines for social distancing and sanitation. Below, please find a list of shared industry BMP's (Best Management Practices) relevant to our outdoor industry:

General:

- Educate team on your COVID-19 Safety Plan.
 - Implement daily all-hands communications within company to inform, educate and reinforce SOPs, BMPs and possible next steps.
 - Educate employees in the language they are most familiar with.
- Relax attendance policies to allow any employee who is uncomfortable working to stay home.
- Contact and get permission from clients to be serviced.
 - Communicate that no contact will be made between client and onsite employees.
- Understand this is a fluid action plan that is being discussed regularly and may change frequently. Clearly communicate changes as needed.
- Be prepared to shutdown at any moment.

Workplace:

- Enforce cleaning and sanitation protocols for all common spaces including trucks, equipment, and the breakroom, locker room and restroom.
 - Wash hands when entering the shop and prior to going home.
 - Sanitize trucks; dashboard controls, steering wheel, handles, etc. Use CDC approved cleaning products.
 - Sanitize all tools daily after use. Use the CDC approved cleaning products
- Employees will drive separately to job sites, only one person per vehicle. If this is not possible, a CDC approved barrier must be installed, such as plexi glass.
 - Assign one truck to one crew and do not rotate.
- Sick employees will be sent home, awaiting a doctors recommendation as to when they may return to work.
- Daily employee health checks and policies in place for exposure notification in line with ADA and how to proceed based on the CDC Public Health Recommendations for Exposure.
- Stagger crew start times to eliminate congregation at office/shop locations.
 - Reduce crew size to compartmentalize the workforce into smaller isolatable segments.
- Office staff are encouraged to work from home when possible.
- All staff meetings moved to on-line or phone discussions.



- Employees are asked to keep all outside interactions to a minimum. The less interactions we have the better it will be for us all. This means:
 - Encourage team members to bring their lunch
 - Buy any snacks, drinks or candy that you need at the market once per week and bring it with you when you come to work each day.
 - The only stops should be absolutely essential and done as few times as possible each day; get gas one time per week, fill one truck with debris and dump as much as possible each time.

At Job Sites:

- Carry Job Site Safety Plan in vehicle.
- Eliminate client contact. Do not knock on the clients door to announce yourself.
 - In the scenario a customer appears, keep 10' social distance from customers.
- Employees are instructed to wear garden gloves at all times, removing only to eat, drink, or touch your face. Sanitizing appropriately according to CDC guidelines.
- Each truck will have hand sanitizer to sterilize their hands when arriving on-site.
- If you must work near another person for a short period of time a face mask or covering is required.
- Minimize or eliminate use of shared equipment and tools. Sanitize according to CDC guidelines.
- Instruct crews to bring lunch to eliminate stopping for food service.
- Instruct crews to have 6 feet social distance while eating.
- Sanitize jobsite upon arrival and departure (gate handles; hoses; etc.)