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OSHA, Illinois Issue Safety Measures for Construction, Other Essential Businesses



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Construction

As the nation continues to struggle with the spread of the novel coronavirus, the construction industry has often been designated as an essential sector of the economy and encouraged to continue operations while shelter-in-place orders have temporarily shuttered many other businesses (a summary of these various state orders can be found [here](#)).

Last week, the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) [issued an alert](#) listing "safety tips employers can follow to help protect construction workers from exposure to the coronavirus." Those tips include:

- Encouraging workers to stay home if they are sick;
- Training workers how to properly put on, use/wear, and take off protective clothing and equipment;
- Allowing workers to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent them from spreading the virus;
- Continuing to use other normal control measures, including personal protective equipment, necessary to protect workers from other job hazards associated with construction activities;
- Advising workers to avoid physical contact with others and directing employees/contractors/visitors to increase personal space to at least six feet, where possible. Where work trailers are used, all workers should maintain social distancing while inside the trailers;
- Promoting personal hygiene. If workers do not have immediate access to soap and water for handwashing, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol;
- Using [Environmental Protection Agency-approved cleaning chemicals from List N](#) or that have label claims against the coronavirus; and
- Encouraging workers to report any safety and health concerns.

In addition to the OSHA guidance, for construction activities in Illinois, [Gov. J.B. Pritzker has announced the modified Stay at Home Order](#) will require new safety measures for essential businesses and manufacturers effective May 1, 2020.

According to the Governor's announcement, "Essential businesses and manufacturers will be required to provide face coverings to all employees who are not able to maintain six-feet of social distancing, as well as follow new requirements that maximize social distancing and prioritize the well-being of employees and customers. This includes occupancy limits for essential businesses and precautions such as staggering shifts and operating only essential lines for manufacturers." Although the details of these forthcoming requirements are not yet known, it appears that those in the construction industry will be impacted.

As an additional resource, please also refer to our previous article [Identifying and Managing Construction Risks During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#).