

**DISASTER VULNERABILITY REDUCTION PROJECT
GUIDELINES FOR CONSTRUCTION AND CIVIL WORKS**

COVID-19 SAFETY ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE - MANAGING THE RISKS

WHAT IS CORONA (COVID-19) DISEASE:

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. It is a respiratory disease and is contagious. Common symptoms include: fever, tiredness, dry cough. Other symptoms include: shortness of breath, aches and pains, sore throat and some people report diarrhoea, nausea or runny nose; https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1. The disease is categorised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a pandemic.

HOW THE COVID-19 DISEASE SPREADS:

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales they release droplets of infected fluid. Most of these droplets fall on nearby surfaces and objects, people could catch COVID-19 by touching these contaminated areas and then touching their eyes, nose, mouth or face in general. If they are standing within 2 metres (6.4 feet) of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them. COVID-19 spreads in a similar way to flu. ANYONE can become infected.

It is highly recommended that any worker who has any symptoms related to cold, flu or COVID-19 should be immediately isolated and proper procedure followed as advised by the Ministry of Health.

SIMPLE GUIDELINES TO PREVENT/MANAGE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 ON YOUR CONSTRUCTION SITE:

The World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health in Dominica advises that ***physical/social distancing, frequent handwashing*** and ***respiratory etiquette*** are important to help prevent the spread of this disease. Please see details of these and other recommended measures to safeguard health and safety while on site as follows: **Note:** The Contractor remains responsible for Health and Safety on site.

Physical Distancing - Maintain at least 2 metres (~6 feet) distance between yourself and anyone. Keeping physical distancing between everyone on construction sites will be challenging at times but is a key measure to minimise the spread of COVID-19. To manage risks:

- Limit visitors to the site, only allow authorised, essential personnel
- Limit physical interactions between workers, workers and clients, and workers and other persons at the site (e.g. deliveries) and use other methods such as mobile phone or radio to communicate
- Limit worker numbers on site where possible
- Split shifts where possible into AM and PM or different days based on activity
- Reduce the number of tasks to be completed each day where possible
- Create specific walkways through the construction site to maintain physical separation
- Stagger meal times and breaks to limit the number of workers congregating in one area
- Conduct toolbox and other meetings online, including through an app, where you can. If not, conduct such meetings in wide open spaces to enable workers to keep the required physical distance
- Limit the number of workers in any one particular area, e.g. to use ladder, stairway, etc.
- Postpone non-essential training
- Place signage about physical distancing around the work site where you can

Identify responsible persons to make sure workers are following the rules for physical distancing. If physical distancing measures causes other health and safety risks, you need to manage those risks too.

Health Checks by Contractor - Monitor your workers for key symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever. Direct all workers (whether they are at the construction site or not) to report to you if:

- They are experiencing any symptoms associated with this disease
- They have been, or have potentially been, exposed to a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19 (even if the person who is suspected to have COVID-19 has not yet been tested)
- Encourage workers to report if they observe another worker is displaying any symptoms
- Prohibit workers accessing the site and working if they are displaying any symptoms
- Prohibit workers who have contracted COVID-19 from returning to the workplace until they provide official medical evidence that they are cleared of the virus and fit to work
- Immediately inform the Project Coordinating Unit (PCU), Disaster Vulnerability Reduction Project

A responsible person should be at the entrance of the site at the beginning of each work day to do these basic health checks and record yes/no to the checks.

Workers Hygiene - All workers/persons on site are required to practice good hygiene. This includes:

- ***Frequent Hand Washing*** - Properly wash your hands as often as possible with soap and water for no less than 20 seconds, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet. Use designated hand washing areas located on the site. Signs identifying the locations should be posted.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient where hand washing is not possible
- ***Respiratory Etiquette*** - Use adequate face mask at all times. If unavoidable, cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue if you cough or sneeze. Then dispose of the used tissue immediately in a closed bin and wash your hands.
- Have their own personal tools. Where larger tools/equipment/machinery are used, these should be cleaned and disinfected by them before and after each person has used and worker must also wash hands, both before and after using tools/equipment/machinery
- If gloves are used avoid touching surfaces where possible and clean and disinfect areas or equipment handled. Dispose of gloves in covered bin (if disposable) or sanitise and wash if reusable. Do not share gloves
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently
- Practice good personal hygiene, washing body, hair (including facial hair) and clothes thoroughly every day
- Comply with physical distancing of 2 metres/ 6 feet away from others
- Stay home if sick and inform employer immediately
- Avoid touching their face
- Avoid handshakes, knocks, high fives or any other close physical contact
- Refrain from spitting at all times
- No smoking (cigarette butts can carry the virus from your mouth)
- Walk with personal utensils and water. Do not share anything
- Dispose of garbage in a covered bin immediately
- Disinfect and clean all common areas (e.g. washroom, water cooler) after use

Encourage workers to ensure that their co-workers are following the recommendations to protect their own health, workers health and the health of each their families and friends.

Hygiene on Site: Environmental Cleaning - The amount of time the COVID-19 virus survives on objects and surfaces will vary. Environmental cleaning is one way to remove COVID-19 particles. Construction work unavoidably requires regular touching of objects and surfaces. This means that the usual cleaning schedules on construction sites will need to be increased and specific measures employed. The Contractor is responsible for providing cleaning supplies and ensuring that:

- Frequently touched surfaces on a construction site, including equipment, wheelbarrow, buckets, machinery, ladders, lifts, hoists, handrails and doors, are cleaned and disinfected frequently using appropriate detergent or disinfectant solutions.
- Personal items and items used for work such as tools, glasses and phones are frequently cleaned and disinfected (e.g. using isopropyl alcohol wipes).
- Site amenities, including lunch rooms, site offices, change rooms, toilets, showers, water coolers/ fountains and are to be cleaned industrially and the frequency of this cleaning should increase.
- Workers are trained to clean down tools, machinery, equipment, etc. immediately after use.

Deliveries, other contractors/suppliers to the site - Non-essential visits to the site must be cancelled!

- Deliveries and other contractors who need to be on site should be given clear instructions (in advance) of the requirements while they are on site **(This also includes the Client and Consultant).**
- Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible. Make alcohol-based hand sanitiser available for workers after physically handling deliveries.
- Direct all visiting truck drivers to remain in vehicles and use contactless methods such as mobile phones to communicate with your workers wherever possible.
- Use, and ask deliveries and contractors to use, electronic paper work where possible, to minimise physical interaction. Where possible, set up alternatives to requiring signatures, e.g. confirmation email or a photo of the loaded or unloaded goods as proof of delivery or collection.

EMPLOYER/ CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITY:

- **Hand washing areas** - at least three (3) areas should be set up to allow for handwashing; at the entrance to the site, the washroom area and lunch/break area. These should be equipped with liquid soap, running water, paper towels and foot-operated covered bins.
- **Cleaning and Sanitising** - Adopt/schedule more frequent cleaning. To minimise the risk of exposure to COVID-19, the person(s) cleaning should wear gloves (where required) and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves or thoroughly wash hands. This person must take care not to cross-contaminate and should not touch their fsign. If gloves are used these should be disposed of in a covered bin. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be made available throughout the construction site, where practical.
- **Garbage Disposal** - Closed bins with foot pedal or no touch should be provided for workers where appropriate to hygienically dispose of waste and rubbish such as used tissues, immediately after use (or if away from amenities, as soon as possible). Alcohol-based hand sanitiser should be available for workers to use after they dispose of their waste.
- **Washroom facilities** - the construction site should have adequate supplies for good hygiene, such as adequate supply of liquid soap, running water and toilet paper. Washroom facilities must be kept clean, properly stocked and in good working order.
- **Separation of workspace** - adequately delineate between the construction site and the common areas. This could include reminding workers (with posters or through training) to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or thoroughly sanitise their hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before entering and exiting a common area.

- **Schedule breaks** - adopt a coordinated approach to reducing the number of workers utilising the common areas at a given time (staggering meal/water breaks, start times, coordinating work and planning).
- **Information** - inform workers of workplace etiquette and policies/standards that are expected when utilising common areas (cleaning up after themselves, placing rubbish in bins provided, avoiding putting items such as phones on meal surfaces or prohibit use, sanitising surfaces, etc.)
- **Reducing touch points** - consider reducing the number of touch points for workers, e.g. leaving access doors open where appropriate.
- **Air flow** - consider limiting/ reducing recirculated air-conditioning in common areas (if applicable).
- **Disinfectants/Sanitizers** - the construction site should also be well stocked with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, soap liquids, disinfectants and other suitable cleaning agents, paper towels, etc.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY:

- Has a duty to take reasonable care of his/her own health and safety, and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- Follow any reasonable policies/directions the Contractor has put in place in response to COVID-19.
- Follow authorized Government directives
- Clean and sanitise work area as advised
- If you suspect or know you have the COVID-19 virus you should:
 - Isolate and seek medical advice by calling the COVID-19 hotline
 - Do NOT go to work
 - Inform your employer as soon as possible and update them if your situation changes, e.g. if it's confirmed you have the virus

OTHER GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- **Consultation and Communication** - The Contractor should keep workers informed
- ✦ Where possible consult with workers on health and safety matters relating to COVID-19. Allow workers to express views before decisions are made. Involving them will help build worker commitment to this process and any required changes.
- ✦ Avoid/reduce in-person meetings and other gatherings or hold tailgate meetings in open spaces.
- ✦ Ensure there is a means for workers to raise concerns (if any) about the steps being taken to manage the risks or any other related concerns.
- ✦ Provide all workers with information about the risks of exposure to COVID-19. Where required, workers should be trained in infection control.
- ✦ Communicate clearly with workers about control measures.
- ✦ Provide clear direction and guidance about what is expected of workers. Workers should know:
 - When to stay away from the workplace
 - What action to take if they become unwell
 - What symptoms to be concerned about
- ✦ Remind workers they have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.
- ✦ Provide workers with a point of contact to discuss their concerns, and access to support services, note that dealing with this current pandemic has psychosocial effects as well.
- ✦ Ensure that the DVRP project signboard is erected/visible in case the public wishes to communicate with the PCU.

- **Remain up-to-date** - Keep your knowledge of the COVID-19 situation up-to-date.
- ✦ Follow advice from authorised sources only.
- ✦ Ensure the site is properly resourced to manage Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) risks during the COVID-19 outbreak, and check that the resources are being used.
- ✦ Review your policies, procedures and reporting process to ensure they remain current for any incidents, hazards and other WHS issues that arise during this time. Update these materials if necessary.
- ✦ Ensure these are communicated clearly to all employees and that processes are being followed.

- **Maintain Electronic Employee Register** - Daily track and monitor workforce present on site
- ✦ Prior to commencement of workday record the presence of each worker as they arrive. Also check off against this list as they leave at the end of the workday
- ✦ Record if anyone was absent, sent home or isolated for suspected symptoms of COVID-19
- ✦ Inform the PCU immediately, once the critical measures have been taken
- ✦ Include this register of employees in daily report to Client
- ✦ Due to the latency period of COVID-19, it is also important to track where employees have worked, if previously assigned to another worksite or transferred during works. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, this information would be critical to the public health authorities for contact tracing.

- **Incident Notification** - if it is suspected that a worker may have contracted COVID-19:
- ✦ Notification must be made immediately to the PCU after the Contractor becomes aware of the incident.
- ✦ If the incident is discovered while the worker is on site:
 - He/she should be immediately isolated and wear a mask
 - The Contractor should inform the relevant health authorities through the required means
 - The Contractor should then subsequently inform the PCU
- ✦ If a person who has been at the site is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, the site must be closed and the Contractor must thoroughly clean and disinfect all areas of suspected contamination
- ✦ A record of each person on site must be taken, especially noting those in immediate, direct, or close contact with the suspected case
- ✦ All workers on the site should also follow recommended guidelines from the Ministry of Health before leaving the site

- **Health and Safety Audits** - This is usually submitted by the Contractor every two weeks.
- ✦ This should be updated to reflect the COVID-19 requirements, including visible signage on site
- ✦ The H&S Audits should now be submitted weekly

- **Worker Transportation** - Recommended measures should be followed on public transportation
- ✦ If the Contractor provides transportation for workers, an assessment of the number of workers being transported at any one given time should be made and measures taken to ensure required distance.
- ✦ Measures include having workers sit one to a seat with riders staggered; adjusting the number of workers taken per trip; and the overall number of trips needed to transport workers to the site. Use of larger vehicles to ensure physical distancing or use of multiple vehicles may be required.
- ✦ If these are not possible then use other control measures such as adequate PPE where appropriate.
- ✦ Vehicles should be cleaned and sanitised before and after each trip.
- ✦ Whenever possible, workers should travel alone in their vehicles.

N.B: ONLY AUTHORISED ESSENTIAL VISITORS ARE ALLOWED ON SITE AND MUST FOLLOW ABOVE REQUIREMENTS!