

10 top tips:

for creating a **NEW** health, safety and wellness culture on project sites.

Here are the top ten mitigation measures we have seen being enacted on construction sites to remain productive, while preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Additional sanitizing stations (hand wash, hot water) and washrooms

Health authorities, governments and owners are mandating the installation of additional sanitizing stations on construction sites in order to encourage the washing of hands often with soap and water. These are being placed outside of hoists, breakrooms, trailers and across work areas. In addition, foot push/pull devices are being installed to doors for hands-free access/egress.

Limiting size of gatherings

Gatherings on construction sites are being limited to 20 people at most, with a 6ft distance being maintained during gatherings. This includes stand downs, toolbox talks, daily health and safety briefings, and regular stretch and flex programs. Current social distancing practices are being implemented during lunches/breaks as well, with many sites opting to confine workers to the site itself. Where travel in a hoist is necessary, construction workers are being encouraged to maintain a distance and to face away from each other. Mandatory PPE is also required, including gloves, masks and eye protection!

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Enhanced deep cleaning for frequently touched objects and surfaces

Contractors are increasing the frequency of cleaning as well as enhancing the deep cleaning of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as hoists, break/lunch tables and chairs, microwaves, turnstiles and handrails. In addition, all owners of small tools are required to clean these on a regular basis and sub-trades are encouraged not to share the use of these tools on site where possible. There are now a number non-chemical sanitizing processes available along with more traditional chlorine and bleach products.

Implementation of remote working policies

Many office based contractor staff, consultants, and client representatives are working remotely, which has meant utilizing technology to conduct meetings, shop drawing reviews, and other coordination aspects.

Staggered shifts

New policies are being put in place that require trades to arrive on site at different times. And, office locations that are largely vacant, because of recent remote working policies, present options to perform late shift or overnight work at different times with fewer restrictions. This can spread out the number of workers on site at any given time while not affecting productivity.

Turner & Townsend's COVID-19 thought leadership series

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At the time of writing, many construction sites around the globe remain open. As such, forward-looking contractors have begun to institute a new health, safety and wellness culture to keep people safe and to follow the guidance provided by the government and health authorities as it relates to social distancing.

The construction industry is adapting quickly to remain productive and safe in these locations. Therefore, an open, transparent and collaborative attitude to dealing with the issues the industry is facing during this unprecedented time is critical. In fact, their response could herald a industry-wide resetting of best practice for construction sites moving forward.

Implementation of remote site inspections

Many payment certifiers, loan monitors and P3 advisors, such as Turner & Townsend have enacted a remote site inspection policy. This follows guidance received from the authorities and from contractors that non-essential people should avoid visiting sites. A rigorous remote site inspection policy has been enacted, leveraging technology platforms, which allow all parties to review the progress during the preceding period virtually.

Additional lunch/break areas

Many sites have reconfigured their lunch and break areas so that construction workers are not in close proximity. In addition, lunch times have been staggered and restrictions have been placed on the number of workers within an assigned lunch or break area. To minimize workers leaving and returning to the site frequently, some clients are rethinking site facilities, providing catering on-site and/or ordering food to be delivered.

Right to refuse work

The health, safety and wellness of all workers is of paramount importance. Workers across many jurisdictions have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. In these jurisdictions, there is an understanding that no penalties will occur if they decide to enact this right.

Declaration of illness

Sign in sheets, present on all construction sites, are being modified to self-declare that a worker isn't suffering from any injuries or illness (including COVID-19) that prevents them from undertaking their work or putting their fellow workers at risk.

Medical checks upon entering the construction site

In certain jurisdictions, anyone entering a construction site must have their temperature checked. In addition, the various labor ministries are increasing their presence on many construction sites to monitor the health, safety and wellness of workers. Contractors are increasing the frequency upon which their own health and safety representative is on site, to make sure appropriate policies are being followed.

