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TIPS FOR OPERATING WORKSITES DURING COVID-19

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Document Overview

BILD Alberta has created this document for members to use while operating during the COVID-19 outbreak. **BILD Alberta is not a health authority nor an expert on COVID-19**. This document is intended to provide tips and best practices for members to use to ensure the safety of their employees, trades, subcontractors and suppliers during this pandemic. Information contained within the document comes from a variety of sources including health authorities, other associations and feedback from member companies.

Member companies continuing projects during this timing must refer to Government of Alberta COVID-19 information daily to understand any changes or further restrictions to ensure they remain compliant with the most up-to-date information and government orders.

1.2 Latest Information from the Government of Alberta

On March 26th the Government of Alberta ordered the closure of all non-essential services / businesses. **Construction (including residential) is currently considered an essential service but this could be revoked at any time**. As part of this announcement, the Government of Alberta provided the following information and recommendations:

Business and Workplace Closures

Workplaces that are not otherwise restricted or ordered to close can have more than 15 workers on a work site as long as they follow all public health guidelines, including social distancing measures. Employers should:

- *self-assess and find alternate ways to organize large group meetings*
- *cancel workplace gatherings of 15 or more people in a single space (e.g. training events)*
- *employ mitigation strategies to limit risk*
- *continue business continuity planning to prepare critical operations for any potential interruption*

Risk Mitigation Strategies

All gatherings that are proceeding because they don't meet the restriction criteria, including weddings and funerals with less than 15 people, should follow these general risk mitigation strategies:

- *people who are sick with a fever or cough must not attend (even if symptoms appear to be mild or resembling a cold)*

- *recommend anyone at high-risk of severe disease not attend the event*
- *reduce the number of participants or change the venue to allow for social distancing*
- *stagger the time of arrivals and departures*
- *provide packaged refreshments instead of a buffet*
- *increase access to handwashing stations or alcohol-based sanitizer*
- *frequently clean surfaces that are touched often*
- *promote personal protective practices (hygiene etiquette, staying home if ill)*
- *offer virtual or live-streamed activities instead of in-person events*
- *change the event program to remove activities that increase the risk of disease transmission such as those that require physical contact between participants*

Enforcement

If you violate this public health order and proceed to hold an event with more than 15 attendees, you may be subject to a fine.

You can submit a complaint to AHS public health inspectors if you are concerned an establishment is not following public health orders.

1.3 Creating Your Own Worksite Safety Protocols

All members should be establishing their own worksite safety protocols that recognize the risks COVID-19 pose to employees, trades, suppliers and customers. We can all help each other during this unprecedented time. We encourage you to share any best practices being implemented on your worksites.

This is a living document that will be updated as new information becomes available.

2. TIPS FOR OPERATING SAFE WORKSITES DURING COVID-19

2.1 Assessing Fitness for Duty and Managing COVID-19 Risk

- Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing, must be sent home <u>immediately</u> and must self-isolate for 14 days.

- Anyone who has been out of the country must self-quarantine for 14 days, regardless of whether or not they're showing symptoms.

- Should a client, employee, trade or supplier that has been active on a site contract COVID-19, communicate this information immediately to all staff, trades, suppliers and clients who may have been in contact (directly or indirectly).

- Provincial employment standards, regulations, and worker rights have changes since the COVID-19 outbreak.

- If you are a "prime contractor" or equivalent under the provincial occupational health and safety rules, <u>review your obligations related to disease and other environmental hazards.</u>

- Additional changes to legislation and new restrictions may be put in place as the situation evolves. Always consult the <u>Government's of Alberta's website</u> for the most up to date information related to handling COVID-19 work absences and self-isolation.

- Create a screening protocol for all workers before anyone is allowed on the worksite.

- Alberta Health Services has a <u>COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool</u>.

2.2 COVID-19 Awareness and Prevention

- New information and requirements related to COVID-19 are changing daily. Ensure you are continuously monitoring the situation.

- Actions taken should be tailored to your worksites and will need to evolve as new information on COVID-19 becomes available.

- Communicate key Alberta Health Services recommendations to all employees daily using multiple methods such as email, conference calls, and posting notices onsite.

- Be flexible in your routines and scheduling.

- Put up information posters at all access points to the worksite and in all common areas.

- Inform employees that alcohol-based cleaners are only effective on hands that are not visibly soiled by dirt, grime, or other common worksite contaminates.

- Explain the importance of social distancing protocols (2+ metres) to all employees.

- If you or your team needs additional information or resources to distribute work, ask your supervisor for them.
- Maintain a culture where employees are encouraged to discuss and take an active role in health and safety.

2.3 Maintaining Social Distancing

- Follow Alberta Health Services guidelines and limit the number of people in the same space at any time.
- Limit the number of individuals on a worksite at a given time to the maximum extent possible.
  - Change schedules to prevent multiple trades from being onsite at the same time.
  - Trades should work in small teams and keep a minimum of 2m+ between each worker at all times.
- Allow non-essential personnel to work from home.
- Employees maintain a distance of at least two metres apart from each other.
- Reduce in-person meetings by conducting online meetings or conference calls.
- Cancel or postpone all non-essential meeting and events.
- If an in-person meeting is required onsite, minimize the number of attendees to the maximum extent possible and ensure the minimum two metre social distancing protocols are adhered to.
- Take advantage of email, text and teleconferencing to minimize direct contact with others.
- Encourage employees to use their own vehicles to travel to the worksite.
- Stage breaks and lunch times so employees can maintain social distancing.
- Eliminate hand-shaking and other forms of contact greetings.

2.4 On the Worksite

- Post signage communicating key Alberta Health Services and Occupational Health and Safety recommendations to all employees and other information related to working onsite safely.
- Maintain a list of employees that are currently working on each site.
- Post details regarding sign-in/out protocols at all worksite entrances.
- Ensure all trades sign-in/out of worksites.
- Update sign-in/out logs regularly throughout the day to know who is at the worksite.

- Allow a minimum time (30+ minutes) window between trades, staff and inspectors onsite when possible.
- Limit the number of trades onsite at the same time. Physical separation between outside and inside may allow more than one trade on site, depending on the stage of construction.
    - Schedule work to avoid stacking trades and allow for blank days for inspections.
- Provide additional time when needed or reschedule activity when the task cannot begin as scheduled.
- Where possible, increase the number of handwashing stations and post signage that identifies their locations.
- Hold site meetings and site orientations in open spaces or outside where proper social distancing can be maintained.
- When possible, arrange for shipments and deliveries to be dropped off in order to avoid personal contact. If a signature is required, use your own pen.
- Eliminate the need for signatures or the transfer of paper documents. Use electronic signatures when possible.
- Wear gloves as often as possible.

2.5 Home Renovations

- Communicate regularly with homeowners to identify whether you or anyone in the household is under self-quarantine, self-isolation or is showing symptoms.
- Postpone projects if a site is deemed unsafe for any reason.
- Limit trades/size of teams working at same time.
- Ensure workers can wash hands often and sanitize common elements regularly.
- Have clear space boundaries between staff and homeowners.
- Have homeowners stay out of renovation areas even when staff are not present.
- If possible, have a washroom dedicated for workers to use.

2.6 Working with Trades, Suppliers and Subcontractors

- Coordinate with trades, suppliers and contractors to ensure that their staff are following the same protocols onsite.
- Allow trades or suppliers decline or delay work if they can't ensure compliance with COVID-19 related safety measures.
- Ensure that trades and subcontractors know they are responsible for providing hand sanitizer for their workers.

- Remind trades and subcontractors that they are responsible for cleanliness on the worksite.
- Make sure trades and subcontractors know they remain responsible for necessary Personal Protective Equipment and where glove use is mandatory.
- Ensure trades and subcontractors know they are responsible for disinfecting shared tools both before and after each use.

2.7 Cleaning and Sanitation

- Instruct employees on proper hand washing techniques and encourage them to wash their hands frequently.
- Ensure there is adequate access to soap and hot water for hand washing.
- Provide 70-95% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Increase the cleaning frequency on all frequently touched surfaces.
- Identify specific locations and practices for collecting and disposing of daily trash.
- Provide disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles.
- Where appropriate, utilize shoe sanitation tubs (non-bleach sanitizer solution) prior to entering or leaving worksite.
- Instruct workers to change work clothes prior to arriving home and to wash clothes in hot water.
- Arrange for enhanced disinfecting of portable toilets.
- Avoid cleaning techniques that may generate bioaerosols.

2.8 Tools and Equipment

- Reduce sharing tools unless they are disinfected before and after each use.
- Tools shared in and out of any storage locations should be cleaned and sanitized when they are removed and again when they are placed back in storage.
- Have only one driver per company vehicle.
- When vehicles must be shared, clean and sanitize surfaces both before and after each use.

2.9 Handling Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Ensure employees do not share any type of PPE. Ensure used PPE is disposed of properly.

- Reusable PPE must be disinfected as per manufacturer's recommendation both before and after each use.
- Single-use PPE is must be disposed of properly after use.
- Instruct workers responsible for cleaning and trash removal on proper PPE and hand washing practices.

2.10 Breaks and Communal Spaces

- Lunch areas, break rooms, and other common areas must be cleaned multiple times each day.
- Eliminate communal food sources, such as donuts, coffee and water coolers, or the practice of bringing in food to share.
- Provide individual water bottles or instruct employees to bring their own water.
- Be vigilant to maintain social distancing requirements during breaks and while in common spaces.
- Consider having employees eat alone at their workspace or in their vehicle.

2.11 Sales / Design Centres and Showhomes

- Design, show home and sales centres should either be closed or only open by appointment, with reduced hours.
  - Use virtual tours and explore other innovative options that limit the need for in-person meetings / appointments with clients.
- Enforce social distancing protocols (at least two metres) while minimizing the number of staff and clients present at a given time (i.e. one staff, two clients).
- Have hand sanitizer widely available especially at entrances as people come in.
- Make information regarding the sanitation measures your company is taking available to all visitors.
- Request clients refrain from touching surfaces. Sanitize all surfaces after each appointment.
- Limit the use of brochures and other paper documents. Consider sending digital documentation only or handing them out to visitors instead being left out.
- Limit person-to-person exchange of credit cards; use tap when available.
- Sanitize debit machines before and after every use.
- Equipment such as phones, keyboards, and desks should be sanitized regularly.

2.12 In the Office

- When possible, allow employees to work from home.

- For staff that must go to a physical office, ensure that social distancing protocols are in place and that interaction with others is limited.

- Review and update working from home security and safety policies.

- Consider staggering start / finish times to reduce the number of people arriving or departing at the same time.

- Create space between desks to ensure social distancing requirements are maintained.

- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at the end of each day.

- Conduct meetings via telephone and video conferencing. Do not hold in person meetings.

- Limit the number of occupants in any elevator to 2-3 people at a time.

- Distribute workloads to avoid rushing.

- Eliminate the need for signatures or the transfer of paper documents. Use electronic signatures when possible.

- Arrange for delivery person to place item(s) in a safe location and leave to avoid contact.

- Ask employees to use gloves or wash hands immediately after handling or signing for packages.

- Consider assessing how your office currently operates in light of the COVID-19 crisis and if it should operate in a different manner at this time.

3. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

* Links from outside sources often change without notice.

3.1 Key Resources Related to COVID-19

Governments

- Government of Alberta
  - Updates and Info for Albertans
  - Chief Medical Officer Updates
  - COVID-19 Information Posters
- Government of Canada
  - COVID-19 updates
  - Prevention and Risk
  - Symptoms and Treatment

Agencies and Health Authorities

- Alberta Health Services
  - Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - Information for Albertans
  - COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
  - OHS Legislation
  - OHS COVID-19 Resources
  - Respiratory viruses and the workplace
- Worker's Compensation Board - Alberta
  - COVID-19 News and Announcements
  - COVID-19 Employer Fact Sheet
  - COVID-19 Worker Fact Sheet
- World Health Association
  - Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)
  - COVID-19 Advice for the Public

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - [Coronavirus (COVID-19)](#)
  - [Talking with children about Coronavirus](#)

Industry Associations

- Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) – National
  - [COVID-19 and the Residential Construction Industry](#)
  - [Members Only Section – COVID-19](#) (Log-in required)
  - [Residential Construction Guidelines for Operating during COVID-19](#)
  - [Approval, Permits, and Inspection Processes for New Homes](#) (& Adjustments During COVID-19)
  - [Statement from CHBA](#): Canada's residential construction industry is putting safety and health first
- BILD – Calgary Region
  - [COVID-19 Workplace Safety](#)
  - [COVID-19 BILD COVID-19 Updates](#)
- CHBA – Edmonton Region
  - [Updates on COVID-19](#)
- UDI – Edmonton
  - [COVID-19 Updates](#)
- BILD – Central Alberta
  - [COVID-19 Business Resources](#)
- BILD – Lethbridge Region
  - [COVID-19 Resources Page](#)
- Alberta Construction Safety Association
  - [Your ACSA's Response to COVID-19](#)
  - [COR Auditing During COVID-19](#)
  - [Reducing Exposure to COVID-19 on Construction Sites](#)
- Alberta Construction Association
  - [COVID 19 and where you can go for up to date information](#)
  - [Construction Pandemic Planning Document](#)

- o [Covid-19 Project Suspension Impact Checklist](#)
- o [Proactive Documentation of Impacts of Covid-19](#)
- o [COVID-19 – What Should I Do on My Construction Project – Right Now?](#)

3.2 Wellness and Support Resources

- Emergencies - 911 (24/7)
- Health Link - 811 (24/7)
- [Addiction Helpline](#) – 1-866-332-2322 (24/7)
- [Family Violence – Find Supports](#) – 310-1818
- [Income Supports](#) – 1-866-644-5135
- [Kids Help Phone](#) – 1-800-668-6868
- [Mental Health Helpline](#) – 1-877-303-2642 (24/7)
- [MyHealth.Alberta.ca: List of Important Numbers](#)
- [Toll Free Crisis Line / Distress Centres](#)
    - o 780 area code: 1-800-482-4357
    - o 403 area code: 1-800-784-2433
- Alberta Health Services – [Addiction and Mental Health](#)
    - o [Resources for employees and employers](#)
    - o [Help in tough times](#)
- [Text4Hope](#)
    - o Supporting Mental Health & Wellness in a Time of Stress & Isolation.
    - o Text COVID19HOPE to 393939 to subscribe.
    - o The program provides one-way communication and does not replace other mental health therapies and supports. It is a helpful option for people in self-isolation who can't access face-to-face services, as well as those in remote locations.
- [Mental Wellness Moments, Dr. Nicholas Mitchell](#)
    - o A collection of mental wellness videos by Dr. Nicholas Mitchell, AHS Provincial Medical Director, Addiction and Mental Health.
- [Healthy together](#)

- A guide to family and home life during COVID-19. Each weekday, they'll be posting a new story about how families can be healthy, active and safe in these changing times.

3.3 Financial Relief Options for Albertans During COVID-19

Government of Alberta

- Support for Albertans
    - Emergency isolation support
- Support for Albertan employers
    - Business continuity planning
    - Corporate income tax changes
    - WCB premium payment deferral

Government of Canada

- Support for Canadians
    - Mortgage Support
    - The New Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
    - COVID-19: Managing Financial Health in Challenging Times
- Support for Businesses
    - Providing Small Business with Wage Subsidies
    - Launching an Insured Mortgage Purchase Program
    - Deferral of Sales Tax Remittance and Customs Duty Payments