

Resuming Construction Operations Employee Concerns

Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Gallagher

Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

Updated April 9, 2020

In this time of uncertainty, it may be difficult to think about the future. But at some point, we should be able to return to our normal way of life, which includes our normal way of work. Some employees may have been directly impacted by the pandemic, and others may have only been impacted by the jobsite shutdown. You may have no idea what your employees have gone through during this time, from the hardships of isolation to the loss of a loved one.

With this weighing on your employee's minds, you need to be sure that they understand you are here for them. In many cases, the number one item that employees are going to be concerned about is their health on the jobsite when and if they return. Your employees are already familiar with the standard guidelines: wash your hands, do not touch your face, be aware of your surroundings, sanitize everything, etc. With that in mind, you need to reassure your employees that it is safe to come back to work and that your company has done everything in its power to provide a safe workplace.

We are continuing to monitor the evolving situation and recommend you follow guidelines issued by healthcare and government officials, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (**CDC**) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (**OSHA**). The recommendations below are our interpretation of the latest guidelines.

Here are some topics to keep in mind that your employees may have concerns about:

A Clean and Sanitized Jobsite

Employees have been inundated with information on COVID-19 every day. They know what it is and how to keep themselves and family members safe. You need to be sure that your organization is just as informed in the sanitation process. Review the Gallagher National Risk Control document *Sanitizing Jobsite Amenities*, or the **CDC** for guidelines on cleaning and sanitizing.

Healthy Workforce Protocol

Another large concern for your employees may be whether or not their co-workers have been exposed to a highly concentrated area of COVID-19 cases or tested positive. These are all valid concerns and should be addressed by putting a Healthy Workforce Protocol in place. Review the Gallagher National Risk Control document - *Resuming Construction Operations after COVID-19 - Employer Concerns* for guidelines.

Adequate and Available PPE on the Jobsite

Employees will likely be concerned about the availability of adequate PPE on the jobsite. PPE may be the last defense in the hierarchy of controls, but it can be a very effective means in preventing another spread of

disease like COVID-19. This is especially true for Facemasks (N95) that are currently in high demand and are intended for one-time use. In order to handle this situation with the limited supply of PPE, ensure that the site(s) reassess their engineering controls, work practices and administrative controls to identify any changes they can make to decrease the need for N95 respirators or other PPE. If respiratory protection must be used, employers may consider the use of alternative classes of respirators that provide equal or greater protection compared to an N95 FFR, such as National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved, non-disposable, elastomeric respirators or powered, air-purifying respirators. When these alternatives are not available, or where their use creates additional safety or health hazards, employers may consider the extended use or reuse of N95 FFRs, or use of N95 FFRs that were approved but have since passed the manufacturer's recommended shelf life, under specified conditions. Planning ahead for PPE supplies will help ensure that each employee will have access to face masks and other PPE as needed, not only for COVID-19 concerns, but also for the other respiratory exposures they may encounter.

Job Security / Financial Security

Employers should show transparency when communicating with employees. Employees will be searching for answers, specifically answers to questions related to the current and future status of their employment.

Employers should be prepared with answers to a few very basic questions:

- Is this re-start temporary or long term? Are we here to secure the site for a much longer shutdown, or are we returning to some sense of normalcy?
- Will our pay remain the same? Is the company financially positioned to handle a delay in accounts receivable?
- Will our benefits remain the same (medical, dental, vision, etc.)?

Though the above questions seem very basic, having clear and direct answers will be critical. Where possible, executive leadership should be present (in person or remotely) to welcome the employees back and share the company position moving forward. Details of the message can be shared by local leadership, but it is valuable to see and hear the message from executive leadership.

In time, the COVID-19 pandemic curve should flatten and America will get back to work. Utilizing this document and other Gallagher National Risk Control resources, your company may be able to ease the minds of your employees. No matter the trade or type of work your employees are in, we are in this together.

For more helpful and up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, please visit our **[Pandemic Information Hub](#)**.

www.ajg.com/pandemic

Gallagher provides insurance, risk management and consultation services for our clients in response to both known and unknown risk exposures. When providing analysis and recommendations regarding potential insurance coverage, potential claims and/or operational strategy in response to national emergencies (including health crises), we do so from an insurance/risk management perspective, and offer broad information about risk mitigation, loss control strategy and potential claim exposures. We have prepared this commentary and other news alerts for general informational purposes only and the material is not intended to be, nor should it be interpreted as, legal or client-specific risk management advice. General insurance descriptions contained herein do not include complete insurance policy definitions, terms and/or conditions, and should not be relied on for coverage interpretation. The information may not include current governmental or insurance developments, is provided without knowledge of the individual recipient's industry or specific business or coverage circumstances, and in no way reflects or promises to provide insurance coverage outcomes that only insurance carriers control.

Gallagher publications may contain links to non-Gallagher websites that are created and controlled by other organizations. We claim no responsibility for the content of any linked website, or any link contained therein. The inclusion of any link does not imply endorsement by Gallagher, as we have no responsibility for information referenced in material owned and controlled by other parties. Gallagher strongly encourages you to review any separate terms of use and privacy policies governing use of these third party websites and resources.