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PROVINCIAL BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL OF ONTARIO

RECOMMENDED COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOL AND PREVENTION MEASURES

April 23rd, 2020

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➤ INTRODUCTION

This document is prepared to ensure that Ontario contractors, workers, and their families keep their worksites as safe as possible, as we deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The document is a joint initiative of:

- (Insert Local Union/s).
- (Insert Employer Organization).

Public Health Officials are unanimous in their recommendation that effective physical distancing is a key component of avoiding the transmission of COVID-19 infections. Maintaining a safe distance from all other individuals is of high importance. Changes to the way that the workplace is organized to make it possible for workers to work at a safe distance from each other, to the maximum extent possible, is therefore necessary.

➤ EFFECTIVE DATE

These procedures are in effect as of (insert date) and will remain in place indefinitely. This document should be posted at all jobsites and explained fully to workers at each job site.

SECTION 1: WORKSITE PROTOCOLS

Construction worksites often require two or more people to work in close proximity to each other. Maintaining recommended physical distancing may not be possible in certain workplace circumstances. Accordingly, to minimize risks, the following practices should be implemented.

1. Schedule Adjustments

All worksites must structure their staffing policies to reduce the number of workers on site at any given time to levels that will enable effective physical distancing.

Preparing a jobsite by adjusting schedules may mean:

- Reducing the number of crews on site at any one time.
- Extending work deadlines to allow tasks to take place at separate times, rather than all at the same time.
- Staggered work starts and work end-times to avoid gathering at entry and exit ways and other high traffic areas.
- Staggered break and lunch times to avoid physical gatherings.
- Building-in dedicated times to appropriately sanitize worksites and materials into the daily schedule.

Example of Schedule Adjustments

On-Site Production Planning

- To maintain two metres of distance between each person, we will be staggering start and end times for all employees and trade workers.
- This will allow us to limit large gatherings of workers at site entrance points and limit the number of workers at the worksite at any given time.
- Start times for trades will be staggered i.e. half-hour intervals.
- The Employers' site management teams will be responsible for coordinating workflow so that multiple trade workers are not located in the same area at the same time.

2. Work Process Adjustments

Fewer tasks requiring employees to work closely beside each other will also enable effective physical distancing.

Preparing the job site by adjusting work processes may mean:

- Re-arranging the physical site to ensure proper ventilation in all workspaces.
- Imposing strict limits on the total number of workers **allowed in a particular area on a jobsite or in a hoist or Elevator** to enable physical distancing, and limits of one person to a vehicle, cab or other equipment.
- If limiting one person to a vehicle, cab or other equipment is not possible, then the employer must provide appropriate respiratory protection (N-95 masks, P-100 respirator masks or equivalent)
- Creation of designated work areas for certain tasks to reduce unnecessary gatherings.
- Creating one-way paths. Especially when multiple stairways exist, one should be dedicated for going up and the other for going down.
- Re-arrangement of the site to eliminate 'pinch points' such as narrow entry and exit ways, cramped site trailers, and narrow pathways.
- Elimination of unnecessary areas of gathering, such as food trucks or indoor cafeterias.
- Removal of objects likely to be shared from hand-to-hand by employees, such as commonly available reusable mugs or bottles.
- Elimination of all water coolers while supplying water bottles available onsite for workers and staff.

Tasks which require employees to work in close proximity to each other and which cannot be postponed must be stopped until a work plan is developed to find the safest way of performing those tasks.

A workplace plan must be developed and implemented with advice from the Joint Health and Safety Committee, where applicable, to identify the safest way of performing tasks.

Such a work plan may include:

- Alternative ways of completing tasks.
- Ways to complete tasks with fewer people.

- Ways to complete tasks in a shorter time.
- Creating one-way paths. Especially when multiple stairways exist, a one-way path should be dedicated for going up and the other for going down.
- Additional PPE to be worn and sanitation measures to be used while completing tasks.

3. Work Rule Adjustments

New rules about on-site behavior will mean that individual employees are not solely responsible for making sure physical distancing is practiced by all workers. The employer must enforce the rules to ensure that workers maintain appropriate physical distancing and follow all other safe work practices.

Physical Distancing

- All workers are required to maintain a minimum distance of **two metres** from each other and avoid person-to-person contact.
- Non-essential physical work that requires close contact between workers should not be carried out.
- If after appropriate planning and resource allocation, there are still certain tasks that workers must perform during which it is not possible to comply with the minimum distance as set out above, the employer must provide appropriate respiratory protection (N-95 masks, P-100 respirator masks or equivalent) and other PPE as required by this policy.
- **It is important to note that face shields being used as PPE for the purpose of reducing the chances of COVID-19 transmission are no substitute for use of PPE for grinding, cutting or welding, for which appropriate shields to that task must be used.**

On-Site Meetings

- Where on-site meetings are necessary to share information and have discussions, worksites must limit the number of participants in a meeting to no more than five (5) people at a time.
- Meetings/discussions must be held in locations capable of allowing attendees to maintain their minimum distance from each other during meetings while being able to hear and take part in discussions.
- Alternative formats for the sharing and communication of information and for having discussions shall be used to ensure that all unnecessary contact is prevented.
- Spaces for breaks and lunch hours will be provided so that two meter physical distancing is maintained.

SECTION 2: USE OF PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR, GLOVES AND MASKS

1. Safety Eyewear

If employees are required to wear protective glasses or face shields in the course of their work, such glasses or face shields shall be provided by the employer for the use of that employee only and shall be clearly identified as such.

PPE must be issued for individual use only and **cannot be shared**.

Employers must provide training on how to remove glasses and/or face shields without touching a worker's face. Sterilization wipes or disinfecting liquid must be readily available at convenient and accessible stations on sites to assist workers who are removing or cleaning protective glasses or face shields.

2. Work Gloves

Protective Work Gloves

If employees are required to wear protective work gloves in the course of their work, such gloves will be provided by the employer and issued to that employee only. Gloves must not be shared and should be marked with the name of the individual to whom they are issued.

COVID-19 may adhere to gloves. Because the use of gloves may discourage regular hand washing, notices must be posted in the workplace confirming that gloves are not a substitute for regular hand washing, and hand washing stations must be made available to all employees using gloves.

Disposable Gloves

Additionally, if an employee is issued medical type disposable gloves for the purposes of reducing COVID=19 transmission, when a worker is removing gloves, he or she needs to ensure that proper hand washing procedures are followed after removal and disposal. Appropriate training needs to be provided by employers to employees in the appropriate wearing and disposing of gloves.

3. Masks

- Employer policies may require all employees to wear masks/respirators (N-95, P-100 respirator masks or equivalents) at all times on their job sites. The employer is required to supply the appropriate masks/respirators to ensure worker safety as per the risk assessment.
- All workplaces not able to physically distance are required to provide workers with appropriate respiratory protections (e.g. N-95 masks, P-100 mask respirators or equivalent respirators) based on a proper workplace risk assessment.
- Employees must be instructed on how to put on and wear the mask in order to make a proper seal. Employees must be instructed on how to put on and remove masks without touching their faces.
- **For masks to be effective, proper guidelines must be followed. Fit care and use testing guidelines must be observed.**

Lined disposal bins with closing lids should be made available on sites for discarded masks. Masks will be disposed of and replaced immediately if they become damp or otherwise damaged.

Employees must be instructed that mask/respirator use is ONLY effective in combination with regular hand washing. Handwashing stations and breaks to perform appropriate hand washing will be provided for all employees.

SECTION 3: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ACT (OHSA)

1. OHSA Requirements

- Section 31(1) requires that every person who supplies, rents or leases equipment shall ensure that the equipment is in good condition and complies with the Act and regulations
- Section 25(2)(h) requires that employers take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect workers
- Section 25(21)(b) requires an employer to ensure that equipment is maintained in good condition.

2. Reporting Requirements under Section 52 of OHSA

- Infectious diseases acquired from workplace exposures to biological agents are considered to be occupational illnesses.
- Employers are required under Sec. 52(2) of the OHSA to provide written notice of occupational illnesses to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), Joint Health and Safety Committee, or Health and Safety representative and trade union containing such information as prescribed under Sec. 9(2) of Ontario Regulation 213/91 for Construction Projects (O. Reg. 213/91).

3. Construction Regulation (O. Reg. 213/91) requirements under section 29 (1) and (2)

This Regulation prescribes detailed requirements for:

- Flush (water or chemical) toilets equipped with a trap
- Service requirements and records
- Number and location of toilets and urinals and
- Clean-up facilities equipped with hot and cold running water.

SECTION 4: REGULAR CLEANING OF EQUIPMENT AND SURFACES

Please note that any worker assigned to any cleaning duties needs to be provided with the appropriate training and PPE to ensure all safety procedures are being followed.

1. General Cleaning

- All 'high-touch' surfaces must be cleaned using soap and water or an alcohol-based rub at least **3 times per shift**.

- Employers are to provide a checklist of what is considered a "high touch surface" along with details on how the surface will be cleaned.
- This includes but is not limited to:
 - ✓ doorway entrances,
 - ✓ door handles,
 - ✓ light switches,
 - ✓ ladders,
 - ✓ elevator buttons,
 - ✓ keyboards,
 - ✓ phones,
 - ✓ all construction equipment handles, consoles, controls, and seats, subject to any risk to damage to such equipment.
- **At least 3 times per shift** offices, trailers, containers, workshops, and other facilities will be thoroughly cleaned. The frequency of cleaning each work area and surface will depend on the number of people who use it, the duration of use, and the presence of any objects which people might handle with their bare hands.
- Materials such as wood, rebar and pipes, temporary structures such as formwork and braces, and shared tools such as drills, crowbars, and fret saws are rarely touched with bare hands and require cleaning, but do not need to be disinfected.
- If workers are handling the above-mentioned materials, they are required to wear gloves.

2. Disinfectants & Sanitizers

- Alcohol wipes or liquids to be used in thoroughly wiping down all gloves at the end of the workday must be provided. Alcohol content must be at a minimum of 70% for cleaning.
- Wash stations provided on site must be in easily accessible locations. There must be wash stations on every floor of a building.
- All workers must be required to wash their hands before entering an elevator or stairwell.
- Before exiting the jobsite, all workers must likewise wash their hands.
- All workers must be advised that their clothes must be washed upon returning home and that steering wheels and handles in their cars must be disinfected to prevent any potential community transmission.
- A supply of disinfectants and hand sanitizers must be provided throughout the site for general use and must be regularly replenished.

3. Additional Measures for Toilet Facilities

- Poor sanitation is a major cause of disease and can be a serious occupational health risk.
- It is the responsibility of employers, owners, builders, constructors, suppliers of equipment, and supervisors to ensure that all workplace parties comply with the provisions of the OHSA and the regulations in order to protect workers from hazards in the workplace including the protection of workers from infectious diseases due to inadequate sanitation on construction projects.
- **Construction employers** have duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) to ensure that every reasonable precaution in the circumstance is taken for the protection of workers (section 25(2) (h)) of the OHSA.

- **Workplaces need to provide (or make arrangements for) water flush toilets that are connected to a sanitary sewer.**
- **In the event that sanitary sewers are not available, facilities with flush toilets with an external tank may be used.**
- **Workplaces must ensure that the number of toilets reflects the number of workers regularly employed at the project.**
- **Gender appropriate facilities need to be provided, unless the facilities are intended to be used only by one worker at a time.**
- It is important that toilet facilities at a minimum be cleaned prior to the start of a shift and at mid shift and kept clean during the shift, often enough to meet workers' health and sanitation needs.
- Employers should regularly evaluate the condition of toilets at their worksites and set a routine servicing schedule for cleaning, waste removal, and replenishment of supplies such as toilet paper and hand-cleaning agents.
- Toilets should be well lit, ventilated, and in a secure area.
- Soap/paper towel dispensers, hand dryers and hand sanitizing stations on site must be checked frequently and replenished as needed.
- Garbage bins must be placed near toilets' exit doors to encourage people to use a paper towel to open/close the door.
- Paper towel dispensers must be placed near high-touch surfaces such as, kitchen/break room counters, conference rooms, and other locations with shared high-touch surfaces.

SECTION 5: DAILY HEALTH REVIEW

- Every person, including visitors and union representatives who may arrive at a site must be subject to temperature screening upon arrival and are required to complete a self-assessment form.
- All employees must be provided with wearable thermometer patches and temperature readings must be reviewed three times per day – at the outset of the shift, at the mid-shift break, and before leaving.
- If wearable thermometer patches are not available, temperature screening shall be conducted by a qualified medical practitioner or an individual properly trained, as per manufacturer specifications and corresponding instructional manuals, to administer tests and shall include an initial forehead thermometer temperature check and a follow up confirmatory check five minutes later.
- Any employee with signs of a heightened temperature reading of **100.4 F or 38C, or higher**, once the confirmatory check has been performed, must be sent home immediately.
- The health of each worker under each foreperson's supervision will be reviewed at least three times daily for all employees and subcontractors: prior to entry, at lunch, and before leaving work.
- A foreperson must also be responsible for reviewing the health of all workers under his or her care during pre-shift meetings and will require forepersons to assess the health of each worker.
- If a foreperson or supervisor has reason to believe that a worker has signs of sickness/illness- prior taking any action- **must** notify the worker's union representative and must **immediately** call Public Health for guidance on how to assess the risk and response.
- Supervisors must also conduct self-assessments.

SECTION 6: REINFORCEMENT OF BASIC HYGIENE RULES FOR ALL WORKERS

1. Basic Hygiene

All persons on a jobsite will be directed and reminded to take the following individual hygiene measures. Notices and recommendations will include posting the following directions:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after using the washroom - **use alcohol-based hand sanitizer** if soap and water are not available.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- **When coughing or sneezing: cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your arm**, not your hand, and dispose of any tissues used as soon as possible in a lined waste basket and wash hands afterwards.
- **Avoid hugs and handshakes.**
- **Avoid commonly touched areas** including handrails and public transit poles.
- **Notify your supervisor** immediately if you feel sick
- **Wash your clothes** as soon as you get home and shower.
- **Take outside shoes off before entering your home and do not allow them in your house.**

2. Encourage Self-Reporting

- Employees must self-monitor and must voluntarily leave the job site if they experience any signs of illness. The symptoms of COVID-19 are shared with many other illnesses including the cold and the flu. **They must immediately notify the employer.**
- **If an employee has symptoms, suspects that he or she has a COVID-19 exposure or has been removed from the worksite, he or she must immediately notify his or her union representative.**
- Any worker or visitor who begins experiencing symptoms of cold or flu while on site will be sent home.
- **No reprisals will be taken against any employee for doing so and Doctor's notes will not be required from an employee who is sent home or experiences symptoms.**
- Employees with a heightened risk of a life-threatening response to an infection (such as asthma, diabetes, or underlying heart condition) will be offered a job-protected layoff for reasons of sickness and an ROE will be issued to enable that employee to access income replacement during the layoff. These individuals will be encouraged to identify themselves and not be on site for their safety.
- Employees with a heightened risk will provide supportive medical information to the employer who will ensure that the worker's privacy is protected.
- All workers experiencing symptoms **MUST** complete the self-assessment on the [Ontario COVID website](#) and follow instructions found there, or call Telehealth (1-866-797-0000), their local public health unit or their family physician.

3. Employer Obligation “ Disclosure of Potential COVID-19 Transmission”

Employers and Constructors have obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and its regulations to protect workers from hazards in the workplace. This includes making sure workers and supervisors are aware of any hazard that they might encounter in the workplace, including infectious diseases.

Infectious diseases acquired from workplace exposures to biological agents are considered to be occupational illnesses. In cases of suspected COVID-19 due to the potential for spread within the workplace and community, the employer and constructors will immediately notify the union and all other workers onsite. The following protocol will be followed:

1. If a worker shows symptoms of a respiratory illness, he or she must be encouraged to remain at home and contact his or her health care provider, Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or the local Public Health unit.
2. The employer must **immediately** call Public Health for guidance on how to assess the risk and response.
3. Employers, along with representatives of the respective union(s), must then conduct a risk assessment (**contact tracing**) to determine such things as what parts of the jobsite and what other workers would have had contact with the infected worker.
4. Based on this risk assessment, the employer may be required to:
 - Send co-workers and or supervisors who were exposed to the worker home for 2 weeks; ask them to self-isolate and self-monitor and report any COVID-like illness to the employer;
 - Shut down the job site while disinfection of the affected workplace area and equipment is taking place;
 - Monitor workers as they return to the job site;
 - Implement other measures based on advice from public health officials.
 - Employers **in consultation with the union representative should notify all employees who have been subject to a credible transmission risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.**
5. **Under no circumstances should an employer transfer workers to other worksites in the event that there has been a suspected risk of COVID-19 exposure on a site. Nor should employers transfer employees if a site has been shut down due to COVID-19 exposure.**

Collecting/Disclosing Personal Information

- Employers may have to collect, use, and disclose personal information in order to prevent or manage the risk and/or reality of COVID-19's rapid spread.
 - (a) within 14 days of International travel;
 - (b) within 14 days of developing symptoms of COVID-19; or
 - (c) after testing positive for COVID-19,

employers must appropriately balance that individual's right to privacy with the employer's obligation to maintain a safe workplace.

- Employers **in consultation with the union representative should notify employees who have been subject to a credible transmission risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.**
- In carrying out such notifications, employers and unions should make reasonable efforts not to disclose information that might (alone or together with publicly available information) identify the individual who may have caused the COVID-19 transmission risk.
- The objective, rather, is to provide potentially exposed employees with sufficient information to obtain medical advice and, if necessary, treatment. To that end, some guiding principles regarding notification are set out below:

DO NOT PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING:

- The name, date of birth, or other identifiers of the COVID-19 subject individual.

DO PROVIDE INFORMATION REGARDING:

- The fact that the individual was potentially exposed to COVID-19;
- If known:

- ✓ date(s) of their potential exposure; and
- ✓ the extent and circumstances of their potential exposure (i.e., incidental indirect contact versus prolonged direct contact).

(b) Mandatory Public Health Reporting

Public Health is the leading authority for all issues related to COVID-19 and only they can provide detailed instructions to employees and employers. Occupational illnesses among employees on site, including COVID-19 will be reported:

- a. to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (in writing) within four (4) days.
- b. to the Joint Health and Safety representative.
- c. to the Local union ; and
- d. to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

If any employee is confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19, that employee's jobsite must be shut down immediately by the employer and/or the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) until a safety and risk assessment is completed. That assessment shall be completed in conjunction with MLTSD.

Work crews including supervisors who have been in contact with the infected employee must be required to self-isolate away from the workplace for fourteen (14) days, among other measures which at a minimum shall include thorough cleaning and disinfecting of all common surfaces.

Any recommendations of Public Health officials will be followed. Subject to any recommendations of Public Health officials, employees who have completed a fourteen (14) day self-isolation period without experiencing any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 shall be entitled to be recalled immediately to their original position, with no loss of seniority, if applicable.

(c) Rules Regarding Off Site Conduct

- Certain off-duty and off-site behavior during the pandemic has the potential to bring serious health and safety concerns onto worksites.
- All individuals who will be working on active job sites, including employees, supervisors, contractors, visitors, and union representatives are expected to respect the advisories of Public Health Officials and must respect physical distancing requirements at all times, including when they are off work.

6. Transportation to and from Work

Wherever possible, workers should travel to the site while respecting physical distancing measures by:

- Driving alone

- Separating themselves from others (following physical distancing of two metres) and avoiding touching common surfaces while on public transportation.
- If workers are not able to drive alone or respect physical distancing, they must wear masks.
- Sites will arrange for larger parking arrangements in the event that more vehicles or other modes of transportation are used for commuting to work

SECTION 7: INSPECTIONS/ENFORCEMENT

Without adequate enforcement the best planned safety measures are ineffective. All employees must be engaged in the process of identifying and correcting unsafe workplace practices.

The Government of Ontario, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, Employers and **union Locals** all agree that these stringent standards must be adhered to in order to protect employee and community safety.

During the course of regular inspections at Ontario construction sites, Employers and Union Safety Representatives, will continue to:

- **ensure compliance with section 31 of the OHSA to ensure suppliers provide adequate facilities and with section 29 of O. Reg. 213/91 to make certain that adequate toilets and clean-up facilities and water or chemical flush toilets and clean-up facilities with running water are provided at every project and that they are properly serviced and sanitized.**
- Section 29.2(2) of O. Reg. 213/91, requires that hot and cold running water be provided at each clean-up facility and at every project.
- Soap or Hand cleanser and Paper Towels or Hand Dryer must also be provided and the employer will enforce regular use.
- The Regulation allows the use of **Alcohol-Based Hand Cleanser (ABHR)** only if it is not reasonably possible to have soap and running water.

Health & Safety Inspections

The following steps will be taken:

- The employer may assign site employees to temporarily assist in a Health and Safety capacity to ensure workers are staying two metres apart from one another as well as to ensure that the cleanliness of the project is maintained.
- These representatives will be required to complete checklists at critical facilities including **hand wash stations, washrooms, and sanitizer dispensers.**

All employers shall train employees regarding the process for reporting concerns or violations in regard to this policy or COVID-19 risks at their workplace. No reprisal shall be taken against any individual for reporting concerns with respect to this policy or COVID-19 protections.

Unsafe workplaces that do not comply with these measures and protocols are deemed unsafe and workers may exercise their right to refuse unsafe work in accordance with the OHSA.

This policy is appended to and shall be deemed a part of any applicable Collective Agreement. It is enforceable under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the *Labour Relations Act*, and in the same manner as a violation of the Collective Agreement.

APPENDIX 1

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preventative Measures Questionnaire to be completed by all personnel

All employees assigned to (include name of site) must complete this form and submit to (supervisor/union representative).

Personal information -

First and last name: _____

Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Employer: _____

Project: _____

1. Have you travelled outside of Canada since March 12, 2020?

Yes _____ No _____

If Yes - Date of Return? _____ (must be 14 days minimum to stay on site)

2. Do you currently have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, including the following symptoms: fever, coughing and difficulty breathing, diarrhea, muscle aches/headaches?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Have you been exposed to a person who has a confirmed or probable case of the COVID-19 infection?

Yes _____ No _____

Declaration:

I hereby confirm that the information provided herein is accurate, correct, and complete and that the responses submitted within this form are genuine.

I undertake to inform the (union/employer) in writing of any changes to the information already provided.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX 2

EMPLOYER ENDORSEMENT

Insert Trade Union Local Endorsed Safety Protocols for JOBSITE MEASURES to Protect Against COVID-19

I, the undersigned employer, agree to abide by the minimum protocols outlined in (Insert Local name here) in the **Endorsed Safety Protocols for JOBSITE MEASURES to Protect Against COVID-19**.

I recognize that members of (Insert Local name here) have the right to refuse unsafe work and in accordance with that right, any failure to abide by any of the policies above may lead to members of (Insert Local name here) refusing to perform unsafe work.

I agree that no member of Local ____ shall suffer any loss as a result of any member of Local ____ refusing unsafe work as a result of the employer's failure to abide by the above policy.

I further recognize that the failure to abide by any of the policies above may be considered a violation of the collective agreement between Local ____ and the employer and may be enforceable as such.

Dated this ____ day of _____, 2020.

Employer Name: _____

Employer Signature: _____

Name (Printed): _____

APPENDIX 3

SAFETY PROTOCOL FOR JOBSITE MEASURES TO PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19

CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES

