

Construction Worksites

The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state’s economy.



Construction Worksites

The State recommends safeguarding protocols for all businesses in Tennessee, including those that are reopening and those essential businesses that remained open during the Safer at Home order. These safeguarding protocols are based on the recommendations of the CDC and OSHA. To support the Tennessee Pledge, all employers and employees should take steps to reopen safely, help other industries be able to open more quickly, and allow Tennessee to remain healthy and open for business.

Businesses should follow guidance issued by OSHA, the [CDC](#), and [Tennessee Department of Health](#). These guidelines do not replace or supersede any applicable federal or other regulatory requirements or standards. To assist your business in taking appropriate precautions for COVID-19, particular industry-specific safeguarding protocols have been created with the input of private sector working groups in partnership with the Economic Recovery Group. Protocols are subject to revision and may be released on a rolling basis.

These guidelines are intended for the construction industry, including residential, commercial and industrial, and should be utilized by general contractors and subcontractors. Contractors and service technicians may adapt these guidelines as appropriate to their worksite (e.g., plumbers, electricians, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) technicians).

Employee Protection

- **Screen all employees (GC and subcontractors) reporting to work and visitors for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:**
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees and subcontractors:**
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit



- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)**
- **Communicate relevant Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and worksite procedures to employees, subcontractors, tradespeople, inspectors, and vendors:**
 - [How to Protect Yourself](#)
 - [COVID-19 Symptoms](#)
 - Distribute information (posters, job boards, electronically, etc.) that encourages staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene.
 - Discuss procedures with project owner as part of pre-construction meeting including protocol if anyone who has been on the worksite tests positive for COVID-19.
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms**
- **Manage sick employees to ensure any illness is not spread to others present at the site.**
 - Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information
 - Actively encourage employees to stay home when feeling ill, when exposed to COVID-19 (e.g., positive household member case), or if diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Employees should notify their supervisor of any occurrence of those items. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home
 - CDC recommends to immediately separate and send home persons who appear to have illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath, chills) upon arrival to work or begin exhibiting symptoms during the day
 - Communicate your company's Human Resources practices for managing sick time related to COVID-19
- **Properly Disinfect Tools, Supplies, Equipment**
 - Limit sharing hand tools (shovels, float, loots, hand saws, etc.), or disinfect with surface-appropriate products between users
 - Disinfect reusable supplies before and after use
 - Operators should be assigned to use a single piece of equipment all day



- Clean surfaces of construction equipment (pavers, end loader, rollers, cranes, etc.) and service/fleet vehicles (including steering wheel, gear shift, instrument panels, etc.) at beginning and end of shifts, or between users. Use aerosol sanitizers inside closed cabs.
- **Use Face Coverings**
 - When social distancing is not possible wear a cloth face covering (not an N-95 or medical mask, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) while at work to help protect against the spread of the virus. However, if employees are required to wear N95 respirators as protective equipment while performing certain duties in order to comply with TOSHA standards, they must be provided N95 masks in order to perform those duties. Cloth face coverings may be an appropriate precaution against COVID-19 in environments where higher-grade masks are not required by a TOSHA standard. Suggested items for cloth face coverings are bandanas, gaiters, scarves, t-shirts, etc.
- **Utilize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like face coverings, eye protection, gloves, etc.**
 - Do not share PPE
 - Ensure used PPE is disposed of properly
 - Sanitize reusable PPE per manufacturer's recommendation after each use
 - Determine if PPE like gloves are appropriate for specific tasks. Utilize disposable gloves where appropriate; instruct wearers to wash hands after removing gloves.
- **Promote good hygiene**
 - Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection practices, according to CDC guidelines, with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces multiple times throughout the day. Employees performing cleaning should be issued proper PPE, such as nitrile gloves and eye or face protection as needed
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations. If soap and running water are not available, use alcohol-based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer
 - Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles. Identify specific locations and safety practices for daily trash
 - Request additional/increased sanitization (disinfecting) of portable toilets. Frequently touched items (door pulls, etc.) should be disinfected frequently, at least daily or between uses
 - Avoid cleaning techniques, such as using pressurized air or water sprays, that may result in the generation of bioaerosols if possible. If such techniques are necessary to the work, wear appropriate PPE such as a face shield.

Business Process Adaptations

- **Promote Social Distancing**
 - Consider the use of modified schedules, staggered shifts or arrival/departure times, and staggered break times and meals in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to promote social distancing
 - Restricting access to confined areas (field office, control room, etc.) to only essential staff
 - Do not permit employees to congregate in lunch or break areas; stagger lunch and break times
 - Do not use a common water cooler. Use individual bottles or personal cooler
 - If possible, limit stacking of trades to facilitate appropriate social distancing at the worksite
 - Discourage carpooling to worksite
 - When possible, perform meetings virtually or via conference call, or utilize multiple meetings in order to maintain social distancing. Do not circulate a sign-in sheet or mobile device and instead have designated person to sign in attendees. Do not host large group meetings or trainings until larger gatherings are advisable according to the CDC
 - When possible, allow office or non-essential personnel to work remotely to limit the number of people at a worksite
 - Technicians in a building or home should ask that owner/occupant maintain a distance of a minimum of 6 feet. Sanitize work areas and wash hands immediately before and after completing the work.
- **Documentation/Weight Tickets Modifications**
 - If permitted, consider submitting required documentation (inspections, certifications, invoices, prevailing wage reports, etc.) electronically
 - For documents requiring paper copies or wet signatures, consider drop boxes or other non-contact means to transfer paperwork between Contractor and Owner
 - Utilize e-ticketing for truck weight tickets