

# Construction: What You Need to Know about COVID-19 on the Job

## Construction workers are among the groups most at risk of being infected with COVID-19

### Why are construction workers getting infected with COVID-19?

#### ▶ Working too close to other people

In construction, workers often have to work close to each other. The closer you are to a person who is infected, the higher your risk of catching COVID-19.

#### ▶ Working in enclosed spaces

Construction work often takes place in small indoor spaces such as job site elevators and trailers. Viruses from an infected person's breath can float in the air for a longer time in small, poorly-ventilated areas.

#### ▶ Engaging in physical labor

When people are engaged in heavy physical labor, they breathe harder and faster than usual. If there is any virus in the air, they are more likely to breathe it in. If someone is infected with COVID-19, by breathing harder he or she will put more virus into the air.

#### ▶ Using face masks with less frequency

Construction sites are often noisy. Noise from construction and nearby traffic can make it difficult to understand what people are saying when they are wearing facemasks. Workers often do not like wearing a mask while performing physically demanding work because they have to work harder to breathe through it.

#### ▶ Eating together during breaks

A common way that workers get infected is by eating or drinking together. Eating together is a high-risk activity because people have their masks off. They are also touching their mouths. People often talk while having lunch or coffee together, which produces more respiratory droplets.

#### ▶ Engaging in other risk behaviors such as smoking or vaping

Smoking and vaping increases the risk of contracting COVID-19 because the person has to take their mask off. People who smoke are also at greater risk of having a more severe case of COVID-19 if they contract the virus.

### How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 mostly spreads from person-to-person through a virus that is in an infected person's breath. The virus spreads through the air when an infected person breathes, especially when the person talks, coughs or sneezes. Other people get infected when they breathe the virus in the air, or when the virus from an infected person's breath lands in their eyes, nose and mouth.

People can also get infected by touching a surface that the virus has landed on and then touching their eyes, nose and mouth. This type of transmission is less common.



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### What can you do to lower your risk?

- Keep a face covering **over your mouth and nose** at all times.
- **Stay at least 6 feet away from other people** as much as you possibly can, especially when you are indoors or in an enclosed space.
- **Eat or drink alone**, at least 6 feet away from other people. Eat outside if you can.
- At meals and breaks, eat or drink first, then **put your mask back on before starting a conversation** with other people.
- **If you smoke or vape**, do it alone and stay at least 6 feet away from other people.
- **Do not take off your face mask to speak.** Talking, especially loudly, can spread the virus more easily. If people cannot hear what you are saying, try to stop any machinery to reduce noise, write your message or go to a quieter location.
- Whenever possible, **do not share small indoor spaces** with other people.
- **Open windows and doors** to bring in fresh air.
- **Avoid carpooling** to work if you can. If you must carpool, try to ride with the same group of people each day. Have everyone wear a face mask. Open the windows and turn the fan up, set to fresh air.

### Many people with COVID-19 may be sick but not know it

Before you go to work, you must answer daily personnel screening questions. It is important to answer these questions truthfully. There are resources available to workers who cannot go to work because they need to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19.

#### ▶ Working too close to other people

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, do not go to work. Get tested for COVID-19 as soon as you can. Until you receive your test result, try to stay away from other people, in a separate room and use a separate bathroom whenever possible. Wear a mask if you have to be around other people.

#### ▶ Working in enclosed spaces

If someone in your home is sick, try to stay in a separate room from them. Wear a mask around them and open the windows inside.