

# **COVID-19 Pandemic: Protecting Our Members in the Workplace**

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The Iron Workers International is committed to protecting your health & safety on the job, including taking the appropriate steps to limit the spread of COVID-19. Members may encounter someone infected with COVID-19 during their everyday life and on the job. On the jobsite you could face exposure from the environment, materials, tools, and other equipment contaminated with the virus. The following information was gathered from federal agencies in the United States and Canada.

## **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is caused by the SARS COV-2 virus. The illness can range from mild to severe and can be fatal. Symptoms that may appear:

- Fever
- Cough / Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing / Fatigue
- Muscle aches / Headaches
- Runny nose
- Diarrhea

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States and the Government of Canada, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear within 2 to 14 days after exposure.

## **How COVID-19 Spreads**

The virus is spread mainly from person-to-person, including:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet or 2 meters).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own eyes, mouth or nose.

Although the United States and Canada have implemented public health measures to limit the spread of the virus, person-to-person transmission will continue to occur.

## **What Can Iron Workers Do to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19?**

- Stop handshaking – practice other noncontact forms of greeting.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow good workplace hygiene. Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol if wash stations are not available.
- Practice good sneezing/coughing etiquette.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tools, handrails, workstations, gang boxes regularly.
- Maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet or two (2) meters from other workers.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and good hygiene when you must work closer together.
- Cooperate with response measures instituted by your employer and those recommended by health officials at the federal, state or provincial and local level.
- Do not share other workers' phones, PPE or other work tools and equipment, when possible.

## **What can Ironworkers and their Employers do to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on the jobsite?**

- Evaluate high contact areas and develop work plans to address them.
  - Develop cleaning and sanitizing procedures for high contact areas such as break rooms, tool trailers, shop areas, etc.
- Provide wash stations with soap and warm water; if that is not possible, provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for employees to wash their hands frequently.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training when required.
- Provide areas where employees can clean and sanitize frequently contacted tools, equipment, PPE, etc.
- Develop a plan for what to do if someone reports to work sick.
- Develop removal and quarantine procedures.
- Monitor employees who could be symptomatic.
- Employers (contractors, general contractors and construction management) have a responsibility to let employees know if anyone on the jobsite tests positive.
- Consider staggering of work/breaks so as not to have too many workers congregating in common areas, break rooms, trailers, etc.
- Train workers on proper washing, etiquette, PPE use, infection control and sanitation procedures.

## **What if I'm Sick?**

If you are sick:

- **DO NOT GO TO WORK!**
- If you or a family member are experiencing symptoms contact your doctor and follow their instructions.
- Separate yourself from others in your home.
- Wear a facemask
- Call 9-1-1 if you have a medical emergency, such as shortness of breath and other distressing symptoms which your doctor has advised you of.
- If you have a family member who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, do not go to work.
- Avoid sharing personal items and clean and routinely disinfect all “high contact” surfaces.
- If non-life threatening, follow the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.
- If you are at work and are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, tell your supervisor immediately. Your employer will need to implement their response plan.

## **United States Resources**

### **Center for Disease Control (CDC)**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

### **CDC - What to Do If You Are Sick**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

### **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)**

[https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019\\_ncov.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html)

### **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3989.pdf>

Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

**Center for Construction Research and Training – CPWR**

<https://www.cpwr.com/covid-19>

## **Canadian Resources**

### **Government of Canada-COVID-19 Updates**

The official website of the Government of Canada resource containing updated information relating to COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en.html> English

<https://www.canada.ca/fr.html> French

### **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**

Canada's National Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Information

<https://www.ccohs.ca>

### **Canadian Mental Health Association**

Through a presence in more than 330 communities across every province and one territory, CMHA provides advocacy, programs and resources that help to prevent mental health problems and illnesses, support recovery and resilience, and enable all Canadians to flourish and thrive.

<https://cmha.ca/>

### **Employment Insurance Program:**

The Government of Canada offers benefits for individuals who may qualify if they have lost their job.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

COVID-19 claims can be made at: 1-833-381- 2725

**Work-Share Program:**

Work-Sharing (WS) is an adjustment program designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer. For more info check out the website Work-Sharing program or call the Employer Contact Centre at 1-800-367-5693

[www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing.html)