**DRAFT - Summary of Safety Protocols**

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1. Questions to Ask Before Inspections

The following questions, adapted from material shared by Epidemiologist [Dr. Katelyn Jetlina](https://www.linkedin.com/in/katelynkassarjian/), might be helpful to ask when initially scheduling an inspection and again before arrival to the site:

1. In the last 14 days, have you or anyone on site traveled outside the region?
2. In the last 14 days, have you or anyone on site been in close contact with anyone known to have the Coronavirus?
3. Are you experiencing any fever, cough or shortness of breath?
4. Has everyone in the household or site followed the Shelter in Place order developed by the Health Officer, which requires people to avoid non-essential businesses and maintain 6 feet of distance from others not in the same household?
5. Using PPE Equipment

San Mateo County Fire Battalion Chief Jeff Thorne provided this [helpful video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WninSg61ClA&feature=youtu.be) on PPE equipment use, exposure risks and disinfectant tips for staff.

1. Cleaning Procedures

Review the [Center for Disease Control’s cleaning guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html). To prepare a bleach solution, mix:

* 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
* 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Soapy water is also effective cleaner for many Corona-type viruses.

1. Safety Tips When Going On-Site

* **Virtual inspections -** Use virtual inspections whenever possible.
* **Paper plans -** If accepting paper plans, try to put aside for at least 72 hours.
* **Signs of illness -** If any person at a site shows symptoms of illness, cancel and reschedule the inspection. Use photo or video inspections if possible.
* **6-foot distance -** Observe at least 6’ social distancing at all times. Consider reducing the number of construction workers on the job before completing an inspection. Only one person should walk inspections with inspector.
* **Closed spaces -** Avoid meetings in closed spaces like trailers and request discussions happen outside.
* **Avoiding surfaces -** If electronically signing off on inspection cards is not available, have the contractor turn their plan pages for you and use your own pen.
* **Bathroom -** Avoid using porta-potties on job sites. Please use the restroom at City Hall. Just make it a quick stop and then leave.
* **Masks -** Use masks and goggles or wrap around safety glasses during the inspections if you need them for other reasons (e.g. drywall dust). Note: This advice is changing and consider wearing a mask at all times.
* **Gloves -** If using disposable gloves, put on at job site and dispose of when complete– take off before grabbing car handle, touching face, touching other surfaces or materials. Wash or sanitize hands after taking off gloves and disinfect any materials touched during inspection.
* **Shoes -** Use shoecovers to cover your boots at each job site and dispose of the cover after your inspection. Another option is to carry another set of shoes with you. Please change your regular shoes to your work boots in your work vehicle. Also, you can use you rain boot covers over your work boots. Optionally, at the end of the day, disinfect your work shoes or rain boot covers with a bottle filled with a bleach solution and leave in your work vehicle.
* **Cleaning work trucks -** If sharing work trucks, wipe down handles, steering wheels and cell phones frequently.
* **Face-** Avoid touching face, shaking hands or sharing materials. This is one of the best thing you can do to avoid getting.
* **Wash hands often –** An essential activity to stay safe is to wash your hands often with soapy water for 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer (60% alcohol)

1. HIPPA Compliance When Asking Questions

There was some concern about asking health questions before doing inspections. According to Greg Miao, Senior Attorney at ChangeLab Solutions:

* The short answer is nothing in HIPAA would prevent inspectors from asking people about their own health condition.
* HIPAA could apply to the subsequent use or disclosure of information they obtain depending on the specific circumstances, but the more likely scenario is that HIPAA doesn't apply to inspectors at all because they do not qualify as a covered entity.

1. Notes from Call with Epidemiologist

The following is a summary of our call with Dr. Jen Horney, an epidemiologist from the Disaster Research Center at the University of Delaware, and Dr. Katelyn Jetelina, an epidemiologist from the University of Texas Health Science Center, on questions related to Covid and inspection safety. To listen the entire call, visit www.21elements.com/covid

1. **How long can Covid be present on surfaces and materials?**
   * In lab settings up to 9 days on a surface, but not realistic
   * Latest is 4 hours on copper, 24 hours on cardboard and 72 hours on plastic, but it is breaking down steadily throughout this time
   * Important to wipe down surfaces you are going to touch
   * Refer to CDC for how to wipe down surfaces with alcohol based solutions: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
2. **What to do if using gloves at job site?**
   * Put on at job site and dispose of when changing locations – take off before grabbing car handle, touching face, touching other surfaces or materials.
   * Best to use disposable gloves
   * Refer to CDC for the best way to put on and take off gloves: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf>
3. **Are closed or open sites better?**
   * More about the amount of people and maintaining distance
   * Avoid crowding into conference rooms or trailer and ask if meetings can be outside
   * Even if outside, maintain at least 6ft distance and don’t share materials or shake hands
4. **Should inspectors be using eye protection, N95 mask and gloves?**
   * If normally would wear protective equipment, then continue to
   * Due to shortage of masks, only recommended if sick
   * Continue what you do in regular practice with the addition of social distancing, frequent handwashing/sanitizing, no face touching or hand shaking, no sharing materials
   * If sharing work trucks, wipe down handles, steering wheels and cell phones frequently
5. **Is using sanitizer after visiting a job site better than using gloves?**
   * If you have gloves and are able to use fresh pair, great, but still minimize what you touch
   * Still wash or sanitize after removing gloves
6. **How is Covid-19 transmitted?**
   * Droplets from sneezing and coughing, or touching surfaces that have droplets
   * Some evidence that infected people may spread fecal matter
   * Gravity is your friend and droplets will eventually fall to the ground
7. **Can it be transport on shoes if it falls to ground?**
   * Police officers are taking off shoes before entering homes to avoid tracking droplets and healthcare workers take off clothes and shoes before entering house.
   * People can leave their shoes outside or on porch but it there is relatively low risk.
   * Spitting on job sites are a concern but so are asymptomatic transmission – just because someone has no symptoms does not mean they aren’t infected.
8. **Should people be concerned with Port-a-potties? Open sewer lines?**
   * One small study showed the virus present in feces, and toilets can be contaminated
   * Try to avoid port-a-potties because we don’t understand the transmission dynamics yet
   * Actual fecal material is the concern not sewer gases
9. **Should people be using virtual inspections if possible?**
   * Of course, if option
   * Would reduce people to people and surface to people transmissions
10. **How should staff deal with accepting paper plans?**
    * Put aside for 72 hours if possible
11. **Should using cash be avoided?**
    * Credit cards are safer because can wipe down, and touchless payment is best
    * Some evidence shows virus can live on paper money like other surfaces
12. **Are there concerns with HIPAA privacy laws when asking questions?**
    * Some essential businesses have put in place screenings – hand washing, taking temp on arrival – and some are wondering if they can do this legally
    * Having screener questions may also be an issue – this will vary by state
13. **What risk level might inspectors be on OSHA risk by occupations scale?**
    * Unsure but any interaction increases risk
    * 80% of cases in China acquired from asymptomatic or those with mild symptoms
    * Could make conditions for inspection – emptying job site prior, only one person, etc.
14. **With many inspectors over the age of 55, how extra careful do we need to be?**
    * Mortality rates are higher for those over 50, and go up extremely over 70
    * A lot of what we know is based on China data with different comorbidities (air quality, smoking) so there is a lot we do not yet know
    * Assigning older folks to other tasks could be an option but might come up against discrimination laws
15. **If someone says they are not comfortable going out, what are cities required to do?**
    * Much depends on right to work, union or laws that govern the workplace
16. **If an inspector lives with someone at risk, what should they do?**
    * Wash hands and maintain social distance at work
    * Social distance at home as well for very high risk individuals (e.g. living with someone who is immune-suppressed)
    * Can use different bathroom and sleep in different bedroom if possible
    * Extra vigilant on cleaning and handwashing
    * Think about taking off clothes and shoes before going inside like healthcare workers (but their exposure is much much higher)
17. **Do you have a sense of how long this is going to go on?** 
    * Modeling is showing highest demand for hospitalization in 3-4 weeks
18. **Why do doctors need masks but others don’t?**
    * Doctor’s need masks because they have to be close to be sick people
    * Incorrect use of masks or gloves can make things worse
19. Resources

The CDC has published [guidelines for businesses and employers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html). There might not be an exact match but looking at them can provide baseline understanding of risks and points of exposures for inspectors.