

Wolf Administration Issues Guidance as Construction Industry Prepares to Resume Work May 1

April 23, 2020

Press Release, Public Health

As the construction industry prepares to resume work, the Wolf Administration today issued guidance for all construction businesses and employees to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

All businesses in the construction industry in the commonwealth are permitted to resume in-person operations starting Friday, May 1 – one week earlier than previously announced.

Previously, Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine ordered most construction projects to cease unless they were supporting life-sustaining businesses or activities or were granted an exemption to perform or support life-sustaining activities.

“My administration has taken measured, aggressive steps to protect public health and safety, including strictly limiting the types of businesses and projects that may continue to operate during this unprecedented time,” Wolf said. “Thankfully, these actions are working, and we are flattening the curve. As we start to take steps to reopen the state, we recognize that the construction industry is vital to Pennsylvania’s economy and may operate safely with stringent guidance in place that will protect employees and the public.”

The guidance, developed from guidance created by the General Contractors Association of Pennsylvania, provides universal protocols for all construction activity, as well as specific additional guidance for residential, commercial and public construction projects.

All business and employees in the construction industry must adhere to the Secretary of Health’s order providing for business safety measures, which requires that every person present at a work site wear masks/face coverings unless they are unable for medical or safety reasons and requires that businesses establish protocols upon discovery that the business has been exposed to a person who is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19.

All construction projects must maintain proper social distancing and provide hand washing and sanitizing stations for workers, as well as cleaning and sanitizing protocols for high risk transmission areas. Businesses must identify a “pandemic safety officer” for each project or work site, or, for large scale construction projects, for each contractor at the site.

Residential construction projects may not permit more than four individuals on the job site at any time, not including individuals who require temporary access to the site and are not directly engaged in the construction activity.

For non-residential or commercial projects, the number of individuals permitted on enclosed portions of a project varies depending on the size of the enclosed site. Commercial construction firms should also strongly consider establishing a written safety plan for each work location containing site specific details for the implementation of this guidance to be shared with all employees and implemented and enforced by the pandemic safety officer.

Contractors performing work at the direction of the commonwealth, municipalities or school districts should defer to those public entities to determine what projects may continue.

Local governments may elect to impose more stringent requirements than those contained in the guidance and in such instances, businesses must adhere to those more stringent requirements.

Local officials have been tasked with ensuring that construction businesses are aware that this guidance exists and notifying businesses that a complaint of noncompliance was received.

Businesses that have questions about whether this guidance applies to them may email the Department of Labor and Industry at RA-LIBOIS-BUILDINGS@pa.gov.

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