



DATE: Monday, March 23, 2020

FROM: James Rush, Business Manager, IBEW 440
Jason Eshelman, Business Manager, IBEW 477
David Shankle, Executive Manager, NECA Southern Sierras Chapter

TO: All Contractors and Construction Employers

RE: COVID-19 Safety Measures on Construction Sites

On March 19, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-33-20¹ directing all residents immediately to heed current State public health directives to stay home, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as the State Public Health Officer may designate as critical to protect health and well-being of all Californians.

In accordance with this order, the State Public Health Officer has designated a list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help state, local, tribal, and industry partners as they work to protect communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security.

Construction workers, including, IBEW 440 & 477 members, have been designated as “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers.”²

We thank the IBEW 440 members, IBEW 477 members and NECA contractors that are going to work, keeping the lights on, and building stronger communities with critical infrastructure like hospitals, schools, grocery stores, and renewable energy.

To all contractors and construction employers – it is imperative that you respect construction workers by taking action to protect their safety.

¹ See Governor Newsom’s Executive Order N-33-20: <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/Executive-Order-N-33-20.pdf>

² See Page 11 of California State Public Health Officer’s memo on Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers dated March 20, 2020: <https://covid19.ca.gov/img/EssentialCriticalInfrastructureWorkers.pdf>

Per the updated bulletin of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California on COVID-19 Safety Measures on Construction Sites³:

Contractors and jobsite safety personnel should take specific steps to increase hygiene on the jobsite, such as:

1. Adding sanitary facilities (toilet and hand washing stations with soap and hand sanitizer provided). Workers should both wash their hands with soap for twenty seconds and use hand sanitizer often.
2. Performing deep cleaning on jobsites including disinfecting handrails, doorknobs, equipment handles and tools on an accelerated basis.
3. Instead of having group safety meetings, and to keep the suggested social distance, they should have smaller individual safety meetings at the jobsite maintaining social distancing guidelines.
4. Keep separation of at least 6 feet as feasible while on the job and always during rest and break periods and lunches; there should be no group gatherings *and limit the number of persons in a single occupied space (such as elevators)*.
5. Workers should consider bringing a lunch made at home and stay away from congested lunch trucks and coffee shops. Go directly from work to home and vice versa with as little contact with the general public as possible.
6. Workers should wear and utilize all safety equipment available on the jobsite. Contractors should provide all protective equipment as available.

Social distancing should be encouraged by having smaller construction crews and, if possible, staggering shifts.

If these guidelines cannot be met and a project is in tight quarters, or in contact with the general public, consideration should be given to shutting the construction project down until safer conditions exist.

See also these COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines from the National Building Trades: http://www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles/20Daily/2003/200318_COVID-19.

The safety of our construction workers is paramount.

We are directing all IBEW members to be in solidarity of practicing COVID-19 Safety Measures on Construction Sites, including the following guidelines of NABTU (North America's Building Trades Unions) and the CPWR (Center for Construction Research and Training) guidelines:⁴

³ <https://cabuildingtrades.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/BTCCOVID19update3.20.pdf>

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1. If you are sick, stay home and don't show up to work.
2. Don't shake hands when greeting others.
3. Try to stay three to six feet away from others.
4. Avoid sick people.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Clean your hands often by washing them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol; soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.

We are also asking members to be in solidarity to prevent the theft or hoarding of construction job site bathroom, hygiene, and sanitation materials. If one sees something awry, say something. Members are directed to report theft of any sanitizers, wipes, and/or cleaning products to their contractors. Just as these items are hard to find in retail shops, they are in short supply for the contractors and must be used to keep the construction sites safe and clean.

Finally, the International Office of IBEW and National NECA recently signed an agreement⁵ ensuring that no adverse actions would be taken against IBEW members that feel unsafe and do not wish to go to a job site – a member's request for a layoff and unemployment will be honored.

This agreement also instructs employers and contractors as follows:

- If an employee is confirmed to have coronavirus or similar disease, the employer shall notify all employees who were believed to be in contact with this individual and take actions consistent with appropriate protocols to prevent the further spread of the disease.

Again, the safety of our construction workforce and contractors is paramount – thank you for taking action to protect these hardworking members during most uncertain times.

In Solidarity,

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⁵ http://www.ibew.org/media-center/Articles/20Daily/2003/200317_IBEW_NECA_Sign