March 26, 2020

From: Dave Reaves – Business Manager – IBEW Local 1547
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To: All Contractors and Construction Employers

Re: COVID-19 Safety Measures on Construction Sites

During the past week, Governor Dunleavy has issued multiple health alerts and mandates in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent our healthcare system from being overwhelmed in Alaska.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Dunleavy issued Health Alerts 9.1 and 9.2 strongly recommending that all Alaskans cease non-essential in-state or out-of-state travel and self-isolate for 14 days when traveling from a location with known cases of COVID-19 to another location within the state.

On March 23, 2020, Governor Dunleavy issued State Health Mandate 9 prohibiting gatherings of more than 10 people, requiring Alaskans to maintain at least six feet from people outside their family unit, and prohibiting the operation of certain businesses.

On March 23, 2020, Governor Dunleavy issued State Health Mandate 10.1 requiring all people arriving in Alaska, whether resident, worker or visitor, to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for illness unless they support critical infrastructure. Employers that support critical infrastructure and whose workers must travel to enter Alaska must submit a plan or protocol to the Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development outlining how they will avoid the spread of COVID-19 and not endanger the lives of the communities in which they operate, or others who serve as a part of that infrastructure, or the ability of that critical infrastructure to function.
In accordance with these health alerts and mandates, the State of Alaska has designated a list of “Critical Workforce Infrastructure” 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.

Critical infrastructure entities include those that provide services or perform work necessary to the operations and maintenance of “Essential Infrastructure,” including electrical, Internet, and telecommunications systems or that provide services that are “necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operations of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses.”


We thank the IBEW Local 1547 members and NECA contractors that are going to work, keeping the lights on, and building stronger communities with critical infrastructure like hospitals, grocery stores, utilities, and national defense projects.

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

IBEW Local 1547 and NECA Alaska Chapter are providing the following safety measure recommendations for construction sites in addition to the NECA/IBEW Joint National Disease Emergency Response Agreement (NDERA) letter and guidance from IBEW President Lonnie Stephenson and NECA Chief Executive Officer David Long:

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 distances, having smaller or individual safety meetings at the jobsite and maintaining social distancing guidelines.
4. Keeping separation of at least six feet as feasible while on the job and always during rest break periods and lunches; there should be no group gatherings; and the numbers of persons in a single occupied space (such as an elevator or vehicle) should be limited to the greatest degree possible.
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 available.

Social distancing should be encouraged by having smaller construction crews and, different show-ups, and if need be staggering shifts.
If these guidelines cannot be met and a project is in tight quarters, or in contact with the general public, the employer should take into consideration shutting the construction project down until safer conditions exist.

See also these COVID-19 Prevention Guidelines from the National Building Trades: https://www.cpwr.com/sites/default/files/CPWR_Guidance_on_COVID.pdf

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 CPWR (Center for Construction Research and Training) guidelines.

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 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 only be used to keep the construction sites safe and clean.

Finally, the International Office of IBEW and National NECA recently signed an agreement ensuring that no adverse actions would be taken against IBEW members that justly feel unsafe and do not wish to go to a job site – a members 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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