

Workplace Strategies for Cement Operations during the COVID-19 Crisis

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. Meetings & Communications

- Designate a COVID-19 leadership team; have that team communicate regularly (daily) at a set time to disseminate information and updates to senior leadership. Consider having representatives from various company departments on this team (e.g. HR, Finance, Operations, etc).
- Send communications via email (or app) to employees; include their personal emails and try to reach workers' families.
- Use conference call, virtual meeting, and other technology whenever possible (e.g. Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams and others).
- Provide best practices and regular communications to entire workforce; include Q&A and guidance based around various scenarios.
- Consider having the company President/CEO address the workforce and answer questions to share information and also relieve some anxiety.
- Be careful talking about others who may or may not be sick and spreading rumors.

2. Workforce – General

- Run a skeleton crew and operate only essential functions to keep business going.
- Have those who can work remotely work from home.
- Develop a back-up schedule in case someone gets sick.
- Practice correct social distancing (6' minimum).
- Stop all non-essential travel, including between regional operations.
- Remind employees that they must be competent to mix their own chemicals; also remind employees to properly label all containers.
- Have anyone "on call" stay home until needed, rather than onsite.
- Have gloves available for anyone who has to sign documents or share common tools.

3. Supplies

- Maintain an inventory of PPE and cleaning products, as available (e.g. dust masks, respirators, gloves, etc.)
- Consider potential supply chain issues. E.g., as commercial air travel decreases, cargo air will become a more common transportation method, which takes longer.
- Acquire bulk supplies (e.g. cleaning supplies) and share between operations within the company.

4. Operations

- Define “essential” and “nonessential” tasks clearly and early; focus on what *needs* to be done and postpone work that can be done later.
- Eliminate ride sharing; enforce a one person per vehicle policy.
- Keep workers operating the same vehicles; when they switch between employees, provide them with a sanitizing kit.
- Isolate various areas of the plant (e.g., scale office, control room, etc.) and keep them locked.
- Have employees go straight to their equipment in the morning; do not gather.
- Designate one person to clock people in and out.
- Stagger shift schedules to eliminate overlap and reduce exposure risks.
 - i. Segregate areas designated for these shifts (e.g. break areas).
- Practice “self-service” as much as possible at the scale house.
- Have a plan for a controlled shut down; if it happens, you want to be ready.
- Deliver safety messages over the radio; make sure the radio channels stay clear so important notices can come through.
- Reduce the amount of task training/cross training needed at the facility as much as possible by devoting previously tasked trained employees to the necessary task(s) being conducted; when training is conducted, do so from a distance if still effective and your training plans allow.
- Postpone Annual Refresher Training (MSHA is giving a 30-day grace period); additionally, look through the last 12 months of safety records to identify acceptable and compliant training that may count towards the required 8 hours. Ensure subjects and sessions are compliant with Part 46 and Part 48 training plans.
- Have a plan in place for training that can be implemented quickly once operations return to normal and contact your field/district office, so they are up to date.
- Ask that employees refrain from congregating in the break room. Look to designate outside “break rooms” with picnic tables or chairs.

5. Cleaning & Sanitization

- Hire a company to do a deep cleaning of facilities or identify a company capable of performing this service.
- Implement a regular cleaning policy/schedule of offices, common areas, break rooms, QC labs, control rooms, scale house, etc. – consider three times daily.
- Consider adding more porta-potties and hand cleaning stations around the plant.
- Clean and sanitize *everything*: pens, credit cards, candy bowls, etc.
- Do not accept cash payments.
- At a minimum, follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.

6. Employee Wellbeing, Sick Pay & Community

- Encourage employees to utilize Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).

- Publish directions and encourage employees to utilize on-line doctor's office visits to avoid exposure at the doctor's office and convenience.
- For those nervous about coming to work due to COVID-19 concerns, consider giving that employee a day to think about it and then have a conversation.
- If an employee tests positive or is symptomatic, must stay home due to childcare, is waiting for test results, etc. consider providing pay continuation (up to 40 hours) no questions asked or implement a compliant reimbursement program – be sure to take into account all relevant local and federal laws and regulations, as these are changing and updating rapidly.
- Consider asking senior staff to voluntarily put their sick time into a “bucket” for hourly employees, should the need arise.
- Consider donating extra supplies to local hospitals and/or first responders.
- Consider offering outside counseling for employees – e.g. a 24-hour hotline with professionals who have COVID-19 experience.

7. Testing, Quarantine, and Sick Employees

- Have a quarantine protocol in place for those who show symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive.
- Similarly, have a protocol for those who have been to high/low risk countries.
- Consider providing 14 days of pay for an employee who is exposed to COVID-19 – be sure to take into account all relevant local and federal laws and regulations as these are changing and updating rapidly.

8. Non-Employees Onsite & Contractors

- Do not allow any visitors unless business-essential (or with VP approval).
- Require contractors to provide a letter daily stating none have tested positive
- Apply the same approach with agencies (e.g. MSHA/EPA) as you do with regular employees – if you ask basic quarantine questions or take temperatures ask them to do the same.
- Post signs outside property indicating that your operation is following CDC guidance.

9. External Guidance & Employer Guidance

- Follow CDC guidelines – including social distancing and not gathering in groups.
- Follow OSHA guidelines.
- Develop a “one stop shop” website for employees where they can get company and general information regarding COVID-19.
- Contact your governor and state representatives to voice your concerns and remind them we are a critical and essential industry. Here is a [link to NSSGA's grassroots tool](#).
- When MSHA inspectors are onsite, educate them about social distancing, what your operation is doing to address COVID-19, and ask them to self-declare their COVID-19 status. For any issues, reach out to the district manager.