

# Weekly Safety Meetings COVID-19 Supplement

Training to Enhance Employee Safety and Health

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Viking EC

June 2020

## COVID-19: Hand Hygiene

Lately, you’ve been hearing about ways that you can help prevent the spread of coronavirus, flatten the curve, reduce the load on the healthcare system, and keep our community healthy. The bottom line is that you want to avoid getting COVID-19, the illness caused by coronavirus. The best way to do that is to keep yourself away from the virus and keep the virus away from you. Today we’re going to talk about how good hand hygiene can keep the virus out of your body.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and face with your hands.** The reason is straightforward: it’s easy for coronavirus to get into your body through your eyes, nose, and mouth. Learning to keep your hands away from your face is an excellent safety habit whether you’re dealing with a virus or a hazardous chemical. When you don’t touch your face, you’re less likely to get COVID-19, the flu, and other illnesses. Not touching your face can also mean keeping dangerous chemicals away from your face and eyes.

**Not touching your face can be hard, so here are a few tips:** You could wear a mask or a full-face shield to help keep your hands away from your face, or at least parts of it. Note that if you do touch your mask, you should wash your hands. Try to make a point of folding your hands (hold them with your fingers interlaced) to keep from absent-mindedly touching your face, especially when you’re waiting or listening to someone. Work on training yourself to be conscious of where your hands are and to keep them away from your face—even when you’re wearing gloves.

**Eventually, you will touch your face.** Wash or sanitize your hands before you intentionally touch your face because you could have the virus on your hands. Then, wash or sanitize after you’ve touched your face, to help protect others just in case you’ve been exposed to the virus.

**Wash for 20.** When we talk about washing your hands, we mean really washing them for at least 20 seconds—not just getting them wet, rubbing some soap around, and then rinsing. 20 seconds of thorough hand washing is a lot longer than you think. To know how long to wash, sing the whole Happy Birthday song twice, or sing the ABC song once, but go all the way to “next time won’t you sing with me.”

**There’s a really good reason to wash.** Washing with soap and water works because coronavirus is an “enveloped virus.” It has an outer barrier that covers and protects the working parts of the virus. Soap breaks up this barrier and degrades the virus so it can’t infect you and make you sick. It takes time for the soap to do its job, which is why you need to wash all surfaces of your hands for at least 20 seconds. The soap is working when there are lots of bubbles, so start singing when you’ve got bubbles on your hands, not when you turn on the water. Even if you’re not talented, singing out loud can remind others to wash for 20 seconds, too.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**Treat coronavirus like other hazards: understand it and respect it. Then make choices to stay safe.**

### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:  
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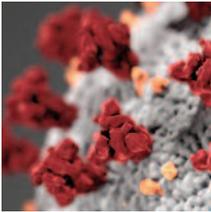
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## COVID-19: Social Distancing

Today we're going to talk about social distancing. This practice protects you from other people—in case they're infected with coronavirus and don't know it. And it protects other people from you—in case you have the virus and don't know it.

**What is Social Distancing?** The whole point of social distancing is to use space as a buffer between you and other people. Generally, you want to keep at least 6 feet between you and others. Based on current understanding, the coronavirus can travel through the air from one person to another. It hitchhikes a ride on the droplets that leave our mouths when we cough, sneeze, clear our throats, and even when we're talking. As soon as the droplets are airborne, most start to fall toward the ground. Larger droplets tend to fall quickly but smaller ones fall slowly and can travel farther from the source. These droplets are typically microscopic; you can't see them and you couldn't feel them if they landed on your skin. If you're at least 6 feet away from the people around you, you're less likely to inhale their tiny droplets into your nose or mouth.

But it feels weird to be 6 feet away from people you're talking to or working with. So, before you get back to work, you'll have to do some planning.

**How far is 6 feet?** A regular, commercial door is 3 feet wide. So you need to be at least "two doors" away from the next person. A standard sheet of plywood or drywall is 8 feet long, a little farther than necessary, but a safe and

workable distance. Depending on what you do, you may carry a measuring tape with you. Stretch it out to 6 feet and get a feeling for how far 6 feet is. It's unnaturally far for a regular conversation. We'll all have to consciously think about staying 6 feet away from each other.

**Plan more space.** Social distancing is difficult when you're doing certain kinds of work and when space is tight. Think about tasks that usually keep 2 or 3 people elbow-to-elbow. Make a plan to spread these folks out. Can the work, or maybe just part of the work, be done somewhere else or in a different way so everyone can be 6 feet apart? How can you change installation work, for instance, so you can stay 6 feet away from your partner?

But while you plan for social distancing and COVID-19 prevention, don't forget the "regular" hazards. You'll have to find ways to manage coronavirus hazards and regular hazards so you stay safe and healthy. If regular and coronavirus safety conflict, talk it over with your supervisor.

It's important for all of us to stay a safe distance away from others at work, in the store, etc., but it isn't what we're used to. Lead by example, and when others get too close, politely remind them that social distancing is the safe choice.

### SAFETY REMINDER

**Be mindful of social distancing in common areas. Pay special attention in bathrooms and break rooms, and near time clocks and elevators, where lines can form.**

#### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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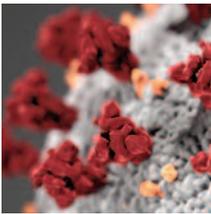
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## COVID-19: Do Masks Make a Difference?

Wearing masks does make a difference. One way the new coronavirus spreads, is by riding on the droplets that come out of our mouths and noses when we speak, breathe, cough, and sneeze. Cloth masks catch a lot of those droplets and keep them from getting to someone else.

**Masks:** We're now being asked or required to wear masks at the grocery store, to pick up carryout at a restaurant, and on some jobsites. You might feel confused about masks, and that's fair, because we were originally told not to buy or wear masks. But now there is newer and better information from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Wearing a simple cloth mask on the jobsite can help keep others safe, especially when you can't maintain the social distancing buffer of 6 feet. Wearing a mask is important even if you don't have symptoms.

Cloth masks do not qualify as construction PPE. They will not protect you from dust, chemicals, fumes, or any other typical respiratory hazard on a construction site!

**Masks will only work to protect you and those around you when they're worn properly.**

- Try not to touch your mask when you have it on. If you touch it by accident, wash your hands.
- Try to not put it on and take it off frequently.
- At the end of the day, take it off by loosening the ties, not by grabbing the front of it. Put it in a plastic bag, take it home, and wash it. Wash your hands after you remove your mask.

### Your mask should:

- Cover your nose and mouth.
- Fit snugly but comfortably against your nose, the tops of your cheeks, and the sides of your face.
- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
- Include multiple layers of fabric.
- Allow you to breathe easily.
- Be easy to wash and dry without changing shape or being damaged.

**What about beards?** If you've worn respiratory protection on the jobsite, you know that you can't get a proper seal if you have a full beard. Even though cloth masks don't really seal to your face like a respirator, beards still reduce their effectiveness. However, wearing a cloth mask over a beard is still better than not wearing a mask at all.

Masks can be uncomfortable and they can be hot. They can get soggy from sweat and from your breath. You may need to have several on hand to get you through your shift.

Cloth masks need to be cleaned between uses. The easiest way to wash cloth masks is to wash them with your regular laundry in a washing machine.

Masks make a difference. Don't be shy about wearing yours.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**Cloth masks are not respirators!**

### NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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