

## Operating Cranes during COVID-19 Safe Work Practices

### **BC Government Guidance to Construction Sites Operating During Covid-19**

As the challenges caused by the COVID-19 outbreak continue to shift, the B.C. government and Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, are taking unprecedented measures to slow the transmission of COVID-19.

Recently, Henry issued an order under the Public Health Act prohibiting the gathering of people in excess of 50 people at a place of which a person is the owner, occupier or operator, or for which they are otherwise responsible. Employers in the construction industry are asking for clarity about what this means for them.

While this order does not apply to construction sites as a whole, the public health officer is directing employers to take all necessary precautions to minimize the risks of COVID-19 transmission and illness to themselves and their employees. This includes:

- There should be no more than 50 people in the same jobsite area in any circumstances.
- Where possible, employees should maintain a distance of two metres apart from each other.
- Post signage that limits the number of occupants in any elevator to four people at a time.
- Reduce in-person meetings and other gatherings and hold site meetings in open spaces or outside.
- Increase the number of handwashing stations and post signage that identifies their location.
- Maintain a list of employees that are currently working on sites and update this list daily.
- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at the end of each day. Examples include washrooms, shared offices, common tables, desks, light switches and door handles.
- Anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, such as sore throat, fever, sneezing or coughing, must self-isolate at home for 14 days.

[Section 4.85 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#) does provide for a minimum standard around the provision of washrooms and hand washing facilities. Where plumbed facilities are impracticable, employers must provide access to portable washroom and hand-washing facilities. Those facilities must be maintained in good working order and must be provided with the supplies necessary for their use.

Employers should reassess their work environment every day and keep updated with the information posted on the Province's website: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)

The B.C. government is doing everything it can to help contain the spread of COVID-19, and the safety of British Columbians remains its top priority.

## BC Crane Safety Recommended Covid-19 Safe Work Practices

The following are recommended BC Crane Safety Safe Work Practices developed based on practices developed by our colleagues in sectors involved in crane operations. BC Crane Safety shares these practices for the benefit of employers, contractors and workers who use, erect, climb and disassemble all types of cranes.

**It is critical to keep crane teams completely segregated from other workers and the public as they move from site to site. This way the team is in complete control of their contact with anyone outside of the chosen team.** The crane crew is to be the only trade working on site during their activity. If site cannot close or attempts to proceed with regular site activity is not possible, it is recommended that the crane team remove themselves until work can be carried out safely. *However, on some job sites, other work activities may be indoors with no chance of interaction.*

It is recommended that cranes supervisors monitor the work area and ensure Do Not Enter signs and flagging should be put in place while crane work is being completed.

### People should not go to work at any job site if they:

- Are showing symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, difficulty breathing)
- Have been outside of Canada, unless they have been in self-isolation for 14 days
- As per the [BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool](#) need to self-isolate.

### Tower Cranes

For any towers inside buildings, no work should be performed by site workers on the base tower, on the day of crane teams' work. All cleaning, stripping and dewatering must be done the day before, if this is not done, it is recommended that the tower be left in place and removed later.

## Tower Crane Erection, Disassembly and Top Climbing Safe Work Practices

### Responsibilities:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| General Contractor              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On the project site, supply a toilet with a wash station on the outside of it is dropped off the morning of a project and picked up that evening.</li></ul>   |
| Site Superintendent             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure these responsibilities and practices are followed on site. Implement disciplinary action for workers who don't follow these practices or any other site safety requirements, i.e. control zones.</li></ul>   |
| Crane Employers/<br>Contractors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implement these practices for the protection of crane employees, contractors, vendors, clients and the public.</li><li>• Supply a water carrier to be used as a hand wash station in conjunction with the one supplied with the outhouse. <i>This is to be present every project.</i></li></ul> |

- Supply Covid-19 specific personal protective equipment if workers do not have available.
  - Ensure Covid-19 “worker risk assessment” before each shift. Ensure a dedicated team is picked to perform the work and conduct the Covid-19 Worker Risk Assessment with each team member. Change team members if a worker shows signs of a cold or any type sickness.
- Employer-assigned Team Member
- Conduct a worker risk assessment prior to start of shift. Document discussion and findings and forward to site superintendent or assigned contractor/employer representative.
  - Ask the workers:
    - Are you experiencing or have you experienced in the past 10 days any of the following:
      - New onset or worsening of existing cough
      - Fever (38°C or 100.4 F) • Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
      - Sore throat • Severe fatigue
    - Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days?
    - Did you provide care or have close contact with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, sneezing, difficulty breathing, or sore throat) within the last 14 days?
    - Have you had close contact with someone who is being tested for COVID-19 or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- If the answer is **yes** to **any** of the questions above, workers must notify their supervisor and go home to self-isolate.
- Remind workers that should their health changes during the course of the shift that they should report any changes immediately.
- Supervisors/Lead Hand
- Monitor the shift’s crane activity to ensure the crane team is segregated from other workers. Use a device, like a whistle to startle and stop people entering the work zone.
- Crane Workers/Team
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in addition to regular PPE when carrying out work *when working close to other workers* (within 2 metres (6 feet)). This includes safety eye wear, coveralls, nitrile gloves worn beneath regular gloves. *(For those who would feel more comfortable, they could use half-mask respirators with P95 or P100 filters, assuming they have been properly fit tested and maintain the cleanliness of the respirator.)*
  - Set up and demobilize work activities without intermixing of the crews on site.

## Crane Operators

- Complete the [BCCSA's Health Screening questionnaire](#) within 24 hours of attending the work site to determine if operator is permitted to remain present.
- Cab will be closed, and no one needs to enter. If necessary, communication will happen through radio or telephone. Maintain physical distancing at all times where possible.
- All sites will be told the cabs need to be cleaned and sanitized the best to their abilities.

## Truck Drivers

- Vacate trucks while loading, wait outside the designated work zone.
- Once loaded crane workers will vacate the work zone while truck drivers strap down and leave.
- It is recommended to use a practice like having operators and drivers sign on behalf of the customers. If implementing operators and drivers should state so on the signature line and note the first and last name of the individual.
- Ensure there is no intermixing or contact with those outside of the designated crane team/work group.

**Day of Activity – Job Site Access**

- Close the site on day of activity.
- Only the first aid attendant, flaggers and site supervisor may be on site the day of our activities.
- Use a designated location as the meeting point for the cranes supervisor(s) to meet site supervisor, site safety officer and traffic personnel in the morning prior to start of work. *Respect the safe distancing at this meeting and place all parties in their respective locations to avoid further contact through the day.*

**Crane Operation/Crane Operator**

- When it is available, use the remote system to function the crane. On projects where operator is needed, operator will not leave the cab and workers are not permitted to enter the cab.
- Once the operator's work is complete, the operator will vacate the cab and leave the crane; gloves should be supplied if operator does not have any.

**Resources**

Links mentioned in this document include:

- **BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool** – This *online* tool will determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.  
<https://bc.thrive.health/>

- **BCCSA's Health Screening Tool** – This *downloaded* tool will provide guidance for work sites to set up onsite screening to ask workers to answer screening questions before work starts.  
<https://www.bccsa.ca/customelements/uploadedResources/BCCSACOVID19HEALTHSCREENINGTOOLMAR31.pdf>
- **BCCSA COVID-19 Resources** – This website offers additional COVID-19 information including bulletins and work practices for construction sites when working within 2 metres of other workers (“Prevention Measures for COVID-19 at Work”)  
<https://www.bccsa.ca/index.php?id=451>
- **WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Resources** – *This website offers additional COVID-19 information. As information about COVID-19 develops, WorkSafeBC continues to monitor the progression of the virus and refer to the guidance of public health officials.*  
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/March/covid-19-and-the-workplace>

#### Other Resources

- **COVID-19 - Standardized Protocols for All Canadian Construction Sites**

<https://www.cca-acc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CCA-COVID-19-Standardized-Protocols-for-All-Canadian-Construction-Sites-03-26-20.pdf>

*Thanks to Leavitt Cranes and BC Construction Safety Alliance for their content. For detailed safe work practices for workers, please visit [WorkSafeBC](#), [BCCSA](#), [COCA](#), [Canadian Construction Association](#)*

***End of Safe Work Practice***