

TOOLBOX TALK #48

COVID 19 – HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?

Just like there are different types of related viruses that cause smallpox, chickenpox, and monkey pox, different coronaviruses cause different diseases in people. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) causes SARS and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) causes MERS. The novel coronavirus, COVID-19 is one of seven types of known human coronaviruses. COVID-19, like the MERS and SARS coronaviruses, likely evolved from a virus previously found in animals. The remaining known coronaviruses cause a significant percentage of colds in adults and children, and these are not a serious threat for otherwise healthy adults.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- New or worsening cough
- New or worsening shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Severe muscle pain without reason

These symptoms may appear 2 – 14 days after exposure. Even individuals with mild signs and symptoms have the ability to transmit the virus. New information indicates the level of infectiousness or ability to spread the virus may be higher right before symptoms actually occur (pre-symptomatic phase). **Do not come to work if you are sick.**

How can I help protect myself?

Workers can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventative actions:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe. Diluted bleach solution may also be used (1/3 cup bleach to 1 gallon of water). These surfaces include job trailer doors, stair rails, door handles, table tops, portable toilets and their door handles, hand wash stations, water faucets and soap dispensers.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Utilize disposable hand towels and no-touch trash receptacles
- Do not share tools and other items (cell phones, pens, pencils) with other employees including personal protective equipment
- Clean surfaces of service/fleet vehicles, steering wheels, gear shift, instrument panels
- Use disposable gloves where appropriate. Instruct workers to wash hands after removing gloves. Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth with your gloved hands
- Employees need to keep a 6 foot distance between them and other employees at all times. This includes jobsite meetings, lunch and work breaks. Discourage hand shaking and other contact greetings along with car-pooling.
- Do not use a common water cooler
- **Stay home if you are sick.**

To stop the community spread of the virus, all of the personal hygiene practices we are practicing here on the jobsite need to also be practiced when you are at home. This will help slow the spread of the virus and protect your family. Please wash your hands frequently and practice social distancing all the time.