

June 15, 2020

### WHAT'S INSIDE

#### 2 Sharpen Your Judgment

How far from roof's edge is enough to be safe?

#### 3 What's Coming

Workers face heat illness risk after coronavirus re-open

#### 4 Who Got Fined – And Why

OSHA issues \$54K fine following plant explosion

#### 5 What's Worked for Other Companies

Seizing an opportunity to make an impact

#### 6 Safety Regs Update

Feds offer tips on managing fatigue during coronavirus

#### 8 What Would You Do?

Worker afraid to return to work after friends, family get COVID-19

### SAFETY NEWS ALERT

**Safety News Alert**, part of the Catalyst Media Network, keeps safety pros up to date on the latest OSHA news, safety training ideas, workers' comp cases and injury cases from other companies. Read what more than 334,000 safety pros turn to regularly for occupational safety information. Safety News Alert's editorial staff is led by veteran Editor-in-Chief Fred Hosier.

## Not back to 'normal' yet: 10 steps to re-open businesses safely

### ■ Experts reach consensus on best practices

As employees return to their jobs after coronavirus lockdowns, a coalition headed by the National Safety Council recommends employers take 10 essential actions to keep workers safe.

The Safe Actions For Employee Returns (SAFER) task force identified 10 actions employers must consider and released playbooks offering in-depth recommendations for doing so safely.

Reopening businesses "will be the most nuanced and complex actions American employers will undertake in the coming months," the NSC said.

Because of that challenge, the SAFER task force – a group of experts

from companies, safety organizations and government agencies – devised these 10 universal actions employers must take to re-open safely:

1. **Phasing.** Create a phased transition to align with risk and exposure levels.
2. **Sanitize.** Before workers return, disinfect the workplace and make physical alterations needed for physical distancing.
3. **Screening.** Develop a health status screening process for all employees.
4. **Hygiene.** Create a plan to handle sick workers and encourage safe behaviors for good hygiene and infection control.

*(Please see Not normal ... on Page 2)*

### ILLNESS RECORDING

## OSHA revises 2 of its coronavirus policies

OSHA has adopted revised policies for enforcing coronavirus requirements as states continue to re-open nationwide.

The agency revised two of its COVID-19 enforcement policies to ensure employers are taking appropriate action to protect employees.

### More in-person inspections

Under the updated enforcement policies, OSHA is increasing its in-person inspections at all types of workplaces.

The new guidance reflects many more non-critical businesses re-opening in areas of lower community spread.

Risk of transmission is lower for specific workplaces, and PPE needed for inspections is more widely available.

Agency staff will continue to prioritize COVID-19 inspections while using all available enforcement tools.

The agency is also revising its previous enforcement policies for recording cases of coronavirus. The coronavirus is a recordable illness, and employers are responsible for recording cases, if the case:

- is confirmed as a coronavirus illness
- is work-related as defined under 29 CFR 1904.5, and
- involves one or more of the general recording criteria in 29 CFR 1904.7, such as medical treatment beyond first aid or days away from work.

This will apply for employee coronavirus illnesses for all employers.

The new guidance emphasizes that employers must make reasonable efforts, based on the evidence available to the employer, to determine if a case is work-related.

Info: [tinyurl.com/enforce597](https://tinyurl.com/enforce597)

## OSHA GUIDANCE

### Recommendations for nursing homes

OSHA has issued more alerts to keep workers in various industries safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

The agency issued a guide for employees working in nursing homes and long-term care facilities for staying safe from COVID-19.

Safety measures nursing home and long-term care employers can take to help protect workers include:

- Screening workers and residents regularly for coronavirus symptoms, and sending sick workers home
- Closely monitoring and taking extra precautions with employees and residents exposed to COVID-19
- Asking visitors to inform the facility if they develop a fever or coronavirus symptoms within 14 days of visiting
- Maintaining at least 6 feet between workers, residents and visitors
- Staggering breaks to avoid crowding in break rooms

- Considering alternatives to in-person large group gatherings
- Monitoring PPE stocks, burn rate and supply chains, and developing a process to decontaminate and re-use PPE as appropriate, and
- Encouraging workers to report their safety and health concerns.

**Info:** The alert is available in English ([tinyurl.com/LTCEng597](http://tinyurl.com/LTCEng597) and Spanish ([tinyurl.com/LTCSpan597](http://tinyurl.com/LTCSpan597)).

### Not normal ...

(continued from Page 1)

5. **Tracing.** Follow proper contact tracing steps if workers get sick to curb the spread of the coronavirus.
6. **Mental health.** Support mental and emotional health of workers by sharing resources and policies.
7. **Training.** Train leaders and supervisors on fundamentals of safety – such as risk assessment and hazard recognition – and on impacts of the coronavirus on mental health and well-being as workers will feel the effects long after it’s over.
8. **Engagement plan.** Notify workers in advance of the return to work, and consider categorizing workers into groups based on job roles, bringing back one group at a time.
9. **Communication.** Develop a communications plan to be transparent with workers on the return-to-work process.
10. **Assessment.** Outline the main factors your organization is using as guidance to provide a simple structure to the extremely complex return-to-work decision.

SAFER had released framework for developing re-opening action plans.

From that framework, NSC researchers created playbooks with detailed recommendations for specific environments, including:

- office spaces
- closed industrial settings
- open industrial settings, and
- public spaces.

**Info:** Search “SAFER National Safety Council” at our website for more resources.

## SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT

*This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.*

### ■ HOW FAR FROM ROOF’S EDGE IS ENOUGH TO BE SAFE?

*We regret to inform you the event you bought tickets for has been canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic, Safety Manager Pete Travers read.*

The letter was from the venue where he purchased tickets for a concert he was really looking forward to.

“I understand why,” Pete said aloud, “but this still hurts.”

A few minutes later, Attorney John Jenkins called.

### ‘Stay 6 feet away from red tape’

“Pete, we have a problem,” John said. “OSHA is citing us. Something about two temps not wearing fall protection gear while working on the roof,” said John.

“A supervisor gave the crew a safety talk then sent them up on the roof with their fall PPE,” Pete said. “The temps showed up later. He sent them up onto the roof as well.

“They were told to stay at least 6 feet away from the red caution tape that was put up at roof’s edge,” Pete continued. “The supervisor had one of the temps help settle a load of planks he was setting up onto the upper level with a forklift, but he stayed behind the tape while doing that, from what I’ve been told.”

“So if they stayed behind the tape, they were outside of the zone of danger?” John asked. “They really were in no danger of falling?”

“Yes,” Pete said.

“Then we should be able to fight this on those grounds,” John said.

Pete’s company fought the citation. Did it win?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the ruling.*

## SAFETY COMPLIANCE *Alert*

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## PPE

### Heat illness risk after coronavirus re-open

#### ■ TIME OFF MAY CHANGE WORKERS' ACCLIMATIZATION PERIODS

Employees returning to work following COVID-19-related inactivity may face some problems as the heat of the summer season kicks in.

Out-of-shape workers required to wear face masks because of coronavirus concerns will return to jobsites just as temperatures are about to skyrocket.

Employers should remain aware of the risks posed by heat illness to workers who may need some time to get re-acclimated not only to warmer temperatures, but also to PPE such as face masks.

It's a good time to review this topic with employees.

#### Dangers of hot environments

Those who work in hot environments could be at risk of heat stress, which can result in heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps or heat rashes.

Heat stress can also result in an increased risk of other injuries as workers can get sweaty palms, fogged up safety glasses and dizziness.

Workers are most susceptible to

heat illness when they haven't been able to acclimatize to higher temperatures. As they come out of coronavirus-related quarantine, they may be used to air conditioning and cooler indoor temperatures, so they could need more time to get used to hot environments.

The same people at higher risk of contracting the coronavirus – those 65 or older, are overweight, or have heart disease or high blood pressure – are also among those at a higher risk of suffering from heat illness and may need a longer time to re-acclimatize.

And risks of heat stress can worsen with masks which function like scarves by keeping warm air near the body.

#### Considerations for employers

Employers with employees susceptible to heat illness should:

- minimize exacerbating effects heat may have in the context of the coronavirus pandemic
- hold refresher training on the hazards posed by heat illness
- implement a heat illness prevention plan, and
- add more rest breaks.

Info: [tinyurl.com/hotwux597](https://tinyurl.com/hotwux597)

## WORKERS' COMP

### Driver's injuries from firework weren't work-related

A truck driver couldn't convince an appeals court his injury from lighting a firework in a warehouse was work-related despite it occurring on customer property while he was picking up a load.

The driver claimed setting off fireworks was a way to bond with his clients, so his injuries were work-related, but the Nebraska Court of Appeals said the incident occurred through his own willful negligence.

#### Short fuse

The truck driver – an independent contractor for Select Van & Storage as a residential mover – drove his truck to a warehouse to pick up a loaded trailer.

The warehouse manager was a

fellow fireworks enthusiast, so the driver placed a firework in his pocket and went into the warehouse.

The driver asked the manager if he wanted to set off the firework.

The manager declined, saying the fuse was too small to light safely, but testified he told the driver, "If you want to light it, go ahead."

The driver went to an open exit door and lit the fuse. The firework exploded instantly and resulting in a partial amputation of several fingers.

The driver filed a workers' comp claim. A workers' comp court dismissed the claim. The appeals said lighting the firework in the warehouse had nothing to do with any part of his job.

Cite: *Webber v. Webber*, 5/5/20.

## TRENDS TO WATCH

Watch what's happening in various states. Some actions indicate trends.

#### ■ PRE-EMPLOYMENT TESTING FOR WEED GOES INTO EFFECT

New York City's law prohibiting pre-employment drug testing for marijuana went into effect May 10.

Employers, labor organizations and employment agencies can no longer require applicants to submit to marijuana tests as a condition of employment under the new law, which makes such tests an unlawful discriminatory practice.

There are exceptions involving safety-sensitive positions such as police officers, commercial drivers, and child or medical care.

The bill bans only pre-employment testing for marijuana as it fails to address testing for other substances or mid-employment testing for marijuana.

Civil penalties up to \$250,000 – along with other damages and attorneys' fees – can be issued for failure to adhere to the ban.

Info: [tinyurl.com/weedlaw597](https://tinyurl.com/weedlaw597)

#### ■ NEW COVID-19 REGS AND ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITIES

On May 18, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer released new workplace safety regulations, and gave state officials enhanced enforcement capabilities and greater consequences for employers who disregard the rules.

Some rules are new, including mandated COVID-19 training and development of daily entry self-screening protocols for all employers, according to the *National Law Review*.

State agencies, such as Michigan OSHA, now have full authority to enforce these rules, and challenges to penalties must go through the administrative appeals process.

The Order does not identify an expiration date for the new rules.

Info: [tinyurl.com/covidMich597](https://tinyurl.com/covidMich597)

## Roundup of most recent OSHA citations

### **OSHA issues \$54K fine following plant explosion**

Dow Chemical was cited by OSHA following an explosion that occurred Nov. 3, 2019, at the company's plant in Plaquemine, LA.

OSHA investigated in the days after the explosion, which was caused by a ruptured vessel in the plant's Glycol 2 unit. There were no injuries or deaths resulting from the incident.

Inspectors found several serious violations including failure to evaluate the hazards of the chemical process, implement procedures to manage changes to the process and correct equipment deficiencies.

**Fine:** \$53,976

**Company:** Dow Chemical, Plaquemine, LA

**Business:** Organic chemical manufacturing

**Reasons for fine:**

*Eight serious violations, including failure to:*

- document equipment complies with recognized, generally accepted good engineering practices
- evaluate hazards of chemical processes
- implement written change management procedures for chemical processing
- inspect process equipment
- correct deficiencies in equipment outside acceptable limits before further use

### **Machine injures worker's hand: \$258K OSHA fine**

An Illinois manufacturer was cited by OSHA after an employee's hand was injured by a machine.

Moving parts inside the machine caused fractures and third degree burns to the worker's hand as he was setting up a production line.

Inspectors found the company failed to control hazardous energy sources and had inadequate machine guarding on rotating parts and ingoing nip points of equipment.

**Fine:** \$258,271

**Company:** Monahan Filaments,

Arcola, IL

**Business:** Plastic products manufacturing

**Reasons for fine:**

*Two willful violations for failure to:*

- implement energy control application steps for shutting down equipment
- provide machine guarding on rotating parts and ingoing nip points

*One repeat violation for failure to:*

- train employees to recognize hazardous energy sources

**Note:** The company was placed in OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

### **Company fined \$234K for LO/TO, other violations**

OSHA cited a storage tank manufacturer for multiple repeat and serious violations involving amputation, confined space, respiratory and hearing hazards.

**Fine:** \$234,528

**Company:** Alexander Tank Company, Luling, TX

**Business:** Industrial machinery and equipment merchant wholesalers

**Reasons for fine:**

*11 repeat violations, including failure to:*

- furnish place of employment free from struck-by hazards
- develop and implement written permit confined space program
- develop, document and use procedures for control of hazardous energy
- provide quick drenching facilities for flushing of eyes and body
- periodically inspect cranes
- properly guard point of operation
- replace cables with damaged insulation or exposed bare conductors

*14 serious violations, including failure to:*

- ensure authorized employees affixed lockout/tagout devices to energy isolating devices
- furnish place of employment free from carbon monoxide hazards
- annually obtain new audiograms for employees exposed to noise hazards

## WORKERS' COMP DECISIONS

### **Can he collect on incidents that occurred years apart?**

A worker seeks benefits for the loss of two limbs in the same incident despite the fact they occurred years apart. Can he collect?

**What happened:** The employee injured his arm at work. Two years later, after surgery, he got dizzy from pain medication, fell and injured his knee, then filed for the loss of two limbs in the same incident.

**Company's reaction:** The two incidents occurred years apart, so didn't happen at the same time.

**Decision:** Yes, he could collect. When an injury occurs in the course of employment, every natural consequence from the injury also arises out of the employment, according to the court.

**Cite:** *Merck & Co. v. Vincent*, VA Court of Appeals, No. 0424-19-1, 1/14/20.

### **Worker was injured due to missing guard: Benefits?**

A worker was blinded after a tool with a missing safety mechanism malfunctioned. Can he collect?

**What happened:** The worker was operating a hand-held grinder which was missing a safety mechanism while wearing a face shield when the disk exploded, shattered the mask and caused him to lose vision in his left eye.

**Company's reaction:** You weren't wearing appropriate PPE, so the injury was your fault.

**Decision:** He could collect. Evidence showed the company violated safety regulations by removing the guard, so it was at fault, according to the court.

**Cite:** *State ex rel. Target Auto Repair Minutemen Select Inc. v. Morales*, OH Court of Appeals, No. 18AP-716, 1/14/20.

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# WHAT'S WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

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**S**CA subscribers include a broad range of small, medium and large firms involved in all types of economic activity. In this regular section, three of them share a safety success story.

## 1 **Seizing an opportunity to make an impact**

What's going to be different about the ESH occupation on the other side of the coronavirus pandemic?

We're talking about PPE in our communities and at our dinner tables. PPE is in our lexicon now. It's created a prevention mindset.

How do we keep the learning gained through the pandemic present?

### **Note the change, keep it present**

One way to keep this learning present is to note the changes in

business. Example: You can't shake hands anymore.

We need to keep this learning present so we don't lose it.

Then connect the decisions made to the success of your organization.

There's been lots of learning that can translate after the pandemic.

Safety professionals are in the position to see what's been learned, and they have to pick up what's been learned, package it and internalize it.

It's a great opportunity on the other side of the pandemic for ESH to still have a seat at the table. This has

provided a new platform to talk about safety and health.

Safety professionals are being recognized for the value they've brought, including richer dialog about not just about safety, but also what sustainability in the workplace means.

Hopefully, senior people in organizations have seen the value safety pros bring.

*(Lorraine Martin, CEO, National Safety Council, during an American Society of Safety Professionals webinar on coronavirus)*

**REAL  
PROBLEMS,  
REAL  
SOLUTIONS**

## 2 **Another role safety pros can take now**

While safety professionals work to keep organizations safe in responding to the coronavirus pandemic, are there additional roles they can play to have a broader impact on their communities?

The OHS profession can expand its wings by reading out to the public health and medical communities.

### **A career option**

Another avenue is educating students in school.

Let high school students know

that as a profession, you can make OHS a career, particularly if you're interested in science and have an altruistic streak.

A program exists to help with this outreach.

"Safety Matters" is for high school students and is funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

It's a one-hour interactive teaching module and PowerPoint presentation targeted to students in grades 7 to 12.

When students are thinking about their first jobs, they're not thinking

about getting hurt.

Safety Matters also provides that awareness.

Another NIOSH resource, the Total Worker Health program, can help OHS pros better communicate with other professionals who work to protect us and keep us healthy.

*(Larry Sloan, CEO, American Industrial Hygiene Association, during an ASSP webinar)*

**Info:** [tinyurl.com/safetymatters596](https://tinyurl.com/safetymatters596) and [cdc.gov/niosh/twh/default.html](https://cdc.gov/niosh/twh/default.html)

## 3 **Important voice for safe return to work**

As more U.S. employees return to their workplaces in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, it's important for safety pros to realize the world has fundamentally shifted.

Now more than ever, we have to act as "honest brokers." Here's what I mean by that:

### **A measured approach**

Safety pros are often the bridge builders between workers, companies and policy leaders.

During the pandemic, safety pros in the U.S. and around the globe are sharing and documenting best practices through consensus standards.

These consensus standards are developed so everyone can take them and adopt them in their own workplaces.

It's a time to put aside business competition and work together.

That's because, as we open the economy, we don't want to find ourselves taking a step back.

Safety pros are often measured in their approach.

They provide the balance between

action (going back to work) and keeping everyone safe.

As we open the economy, we should make sure our messages are measured.

It's also important that we practice humbleness.

We don't have all the answers. The situation and knowledge is changing.

At the same time, if we can't meet the basic human needs of safety and security, you can't get to a high-performance environment because people will be too worried to work effectively.

*(Jennifer McNelly, CEO, American Society of Safety Professionals, during an ASSP webinar)*

## REGULATORY GUIDANCE

### Feds offer tips on managing fatigue during coronavirus

While fatigue has been an ongoing safety problem, the coronavirus has made it even more problematic in critical industries remaining operational, so the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is providing tips on managing it during the pandemic.

Emergency responders, healthcare workers and employees at other essential industries working through the pandemic are stretched thin, having to work longer-than-usual hours with less time for sleeping.

Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep per night – with opportunities to do some resting while awake as well – to achieve optimal health, but long work hours, stress and physically demanding work can lead to poor sleep and extreme fatigue, according to the CDC.

Workplace fatigue increases the risk for injury and makes it easier to contract infections, illnesses and mental health disorders.

#### What workers can do

The CDC has tips for helping workers fight fatigue that include:

- Sleeping in a comfortable, dark, cool and quiet room to get better quality sleep.
- Setting aside time before bedtime

to help relax if it takes you longer than 15 minutes to fall asleep.

- “Banking your sleep” by sleeping several extra hours longer than normal before beginning to work a long stretch of shifts.
- Remembering it may take several days of extended sleep – like sleeping 10 hours instead of 8 – before you feel recovered after working a long stretch of shifts.
- Avoiding sunlight or bright lights for 90 minutes before going to sleep since exposure to light right before bedtime can keep you awake.
- Considering using blackout shades at home when sleeping during the day.
- Taking naps when you can do so.
- Eating healthy and stay active because it can improve the quality of your sleep.
- Before going to bed, avoiding foods and drinks that can make falling asleep difficult.

Workers who do begin to feel fatigue at work should:

- Use a buddy system to ensure everyone is coping with work hours and demands.
- Watch yourself and co-workers for signs of fatigue – such as yawning or difficulty keeping eyes open – and say something if you see it to

help prevent injuries and errors.

- Check with your employer to see if there’s a formal fatigue program at the workplace.
- Report fatigue-related close-calls to management to help prevent injuries and errors.
- Report to a manager if you’re feeling too tired to work safely.

#### What employers can do

According to the CDC, some things employers should do include:

- Recognizing these are stressful and unusual circumstances and the risk for fatigue may be greater than usual.
  - Creating a procedure that doesn’t punish workers for reporting when they or co-workers are too fatigued to work safely.
  - Developing processes to relieve workers from their duties if they are too fatigued to work safely.
  - Rotating workers through repetitive or strenuous tasks.
  - Scheduling physically and mentally demanding work in shorter shifts where possible.
  - Allowing staff enough time to take care of off-duty obligations while allowing them time for enough rest.
- Info:** [tinyurl.com/covidfatigue597](https://tinyurl.com/covidfatigue597)

### SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(see case on Page 2)

No, the company lost. The court found it was “reasonably predictable” at least one of the temporary employees was at risk of the fall hazard.

Pete’s company claimed the temporary employees were at no risk of the fall hazard as long as they were 6 feet away from the red tape marking the edge of the roof.

OSHA argued both temps needed to wear fall PPE since the red tape was not enough to prevent a fall, no matter how far they were told to stay away from it.

The court found only the temp who helped settle the load of planks was at risk because he could’ve been knocked off balance by the swinging load or could’ve inadvertently strayed toward the unprotected edge.

However, there was no evidence proving the other temporary employee, who was much further from the edge, was within the zone of danger, according to the court.

#### ■ ANALYSIS: THE ZONE OF DANGER IS VARIABLE

As the court pointed out in this case, there is no official “6-foot rule” requiring employees to wear fall protection gear only when they’re 6 feet from an unprotected edge.

The zone of danger can be at varying distances from an unprotected edge, even at distances further than 6 feet depending on the circumstances of an individual jobsite.

So employees may still be exposed to a fall hazard even if they seem to be a safe distance from the edge.

**Cite:** *Secretary of Labor v. Gate Precast Company*, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, No. 15-1347, 4/28/20. Dramatized for effect.

## Government notices on workplace safety

Here's SCA's digest of key notices that appeared recently in the Federal Register (FR) or on OSHA's website concerning workplace safety issues.

### HOURS OF SERVICE

Commercial truck drivers will soon be able to count loading and unloading time as breaks thanks to changes made to federal hours of service rules.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration increased flexibility on the 30-minute break rule by allowing drivers to use "on-duty, not driving" status to satisfy the requirement.

Hours of service rules specify the operating hours allowed for commercial drivers.

The final rule with newly updated hours of service changes – which will be implemented 120 days after publication in the Federal Register – are based on those comments and "input from the American people," according to the FMCSA.

Three other changes were made:

- The sleeper-berth exception will be modified to allow drivers to split their required 10 hours off duty into two periods – a split of eight hours and two hours or a split of seven hours and three hours – with neither period counting against the 14-hour driving window.
  - Modifications to the adverse driving conditions exception will extend the maximum window when driving is allowed by two hours.
  - The short-haul exception available to certain commercial drivers will be changed by lengthening the maximum on-duty period from 12 to 14 hours and extending the distance limit drivers operate in from 100 air miles to 150 air miles.
- Info: [tinyurl.com/HOSrevise597](https://tinyurl.com/HOSrevise597)

### FATALITY DUE TO FATIGUE

Regular, excessively long work hours contributed to the death of a railroad track supervisor who was struck by a train, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

The supervisor and the employee

who was supposed to watch for oncoming trains each worked about 38 out of 50 hours leading up to the time of the incident, which didn't allow for enough sleep.

Because both workers were fatigued, their reaction time and thinking abilities were clouded, which factored into the fatal incident.

On June 10, 2017, the supervisor and four railroad workers at the Queens Interlocking in Queens Village, NY, were inspecting and making minor repairs to one of several tracks converging near the interlocking.

One worker was designated as a lookout to warn the others of approaching trains, sounding an alarm for fellow workers and visually signaling the train engineer.

As the crew performed their work, a train approached from a different track and the lookout sounded the alarm and signaled the train, causing the engineer to sound the horn.

Three of the workers remained on the track they were working on, but the foreman stepped onto the track of the oncoming train, which was traveling at about 78 mph, and was killed.

Info: [tinyurl.com/LIRRfatal597](https://tinyurl.com/LIRRfatal597)

### RESPIRATORS

OSHA released a new video and poster on proper workplace use of respirators to help prevent exposure to the coronavirus.

The video and poster offer employers and workers information on how to properly wear and remove respirators to reduce the risk of viral exposure and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Both the video and the poster demonstrate seven steps workers should follow when putting on and taking off a respirator.

The poster is available in English and Spanish language versions.

Info: [tinyurl.com/respEng597](https://tinyurl.com/respEng597) and [tinyurl.com/respSpan597](https://tinyurl.com/respSpan597)

### WHERE TO GET HELP

#### ■ CDC DECISION TREE HELPS EMPLOYERS WITH RE-OPENING

How do you know if your facility is ready to re-open safely in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic?

The CDC has released a decision tree, with a series of questions to help employers answer that question.

The one-page document is laid out in a flow chart format, using a series of yes-and-no questions to help lead businesses in the right direction.

The decision tree has two main focus areas:

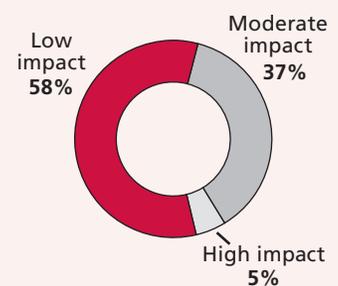
- recommended health and safety actions, and
- ongoing monitoring.

The CDC recommends employers check with state and local health officials to determine the most appropriate actions.

Info: [tinyurl.com/dtree597](https://tinyurl.com/dtree597)

### What safety pros say

How has your infrastructure handled the change to working virtually?



Source: Mercer Human Resources Consulting, 763 responses

About six in 10 companies have experienced few issues transitioning to virtual work. Most others say the impact has been moderate.

Info: [tinyurl.com/covidsurvey597](https://tinyurl.com/covidsurvey597)

Each issue of SCA contains an exclusive survey to give safety professionals insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.

# WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Here's a challenging scenario you could encounter. We've asked three of your peers what they'd do. How would you handle it?

## Worker afraid to return after friends, family were sick with the coronavirus

### The Scenario

"Hey, Mike!" employee John Rodriguez called out, causing Manager Mike Kelly to stop.

"What can I do for you, John?" Mike asked as he turned around.

Mike was on his way to the production line to check on preparations for re-opening following the coronavirus lockdown.

"Have you heard from Tony yet?" John asked.

"No. Why? Is something wrong? He's supposed to be coming back to work with the rest of production," Mike said.

### 'His grandma died from it'

"That's the thing," John said. "Tony is afraid to come back. His neighbor came down with COVID-19 and was in a pretty bad way for a while. His grandma died from it."

"Oh, I see," Mike said. "So you told him to give me a call?"

"Yeah, I thought if you talked to him it would help him feel better," said John.

Later that day, Mike got a call from Tony.

"Mike, I don't know if I'm ready to come back," Tony said. "I've had people close to me come down with this thing, man."

"I - I'm very sorry," Mike said.

Tony was silent for a moment. "My wife got sick at one point, too," he said. "She got tested. It wasn't COVID, but it scared the hell out of me."

"What if I get it after I come back?" Tony asked. "I could end up spreading it to my whole family."

If you were Mike, what would you do in this situation?

### Reader Responses

#### 1 Steve Victor, Owner, Fedco Electronics, Fond du Lac, WI

*What Steve would do:* If I were Mike, I would tell him that he should stay home until he feels more confident to come in to the plant.

I would also remind him that he will remain on the active payroll for as long as he needs to take care of his situation.

#### 2 Rudy Rodriguez, Maintenance Supervisor, Homestead Nursing and Rehab, Hillsboro, TX

*What Rudy would do:* If I were Mike, I would explain in depth any new protocols put in place to help protect employees (plexiglass, face masks, temperature checks, social distancing guidelines, etc.).

*Reason:* I would express empathy

and acknowledge Tony's fears as a genuine concern.

I would encourage Tony to recommend any additional safety protocols that may help eliminate exposures.

I would meet him on his first day back and ensure that his temperature checks were fine and provide him with any new PPE required for COVID-19 (i.e. face mask, etc.).

I would also follow up with him throughout his work day.

#### 3 Elise Allen, EHS Program Manager, Jergens Inc., Cleveland

*What Elise would do:* Mike should listen to the concerns and discuss them with the employee.

*Reason:* It may help highlighting what we each can do in our personal lives along with what the company is doing, as workplace exposure isn't the only exposure.

### OUTSIDE THE LINES

#### ■ CANNABIS USERS FAIL DIFFERENT KIND OF DRUG TEST

What do pro-pot people know about weed? Perhaps not enough.

Researchers set up a table during Hash Bash, an annual marijuana advocacy event on the University of Michigan campus.

Nearly 500 participants answered survey questions such as:

- Which conditions is marijuana effective in treating?
- Which conditions/events does marijuana increase the risk for?

The survey identified a knowledge gap among cannabis users.

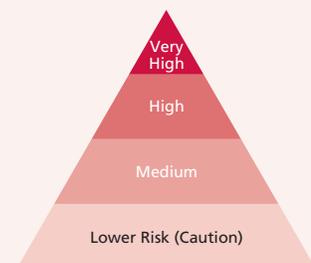
A co-author of the study says the results highlight the disconnect between marijuana advocacy and the lack of scientific evidence.

The researchers' recommendation: more education about cannabis's real benefits and risks.

**Info:** [tinyurl.com/cannabis597](https://tinyurl.com/cannabis597)

### Did you know ...

#### What are risk levels for coronavirus exposure?



**Industry and contact with others determines risk of COVID-19 exposure.**

Source: OSHA

Worker risk of exposure to the coronavirus depends on the industry and contact within six feet of people known or suspected to have COVID-19.

**Info:** [tinyurl.com/exposure597](https://tinyurl.com/exposure597)

*This feature in each issue of SCA charts trends in national workplace safety and health to help safety professionals perform their jobs.*