

March 19, 2020

To Our WSDOT Contracting Partners

The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting every aspect of life in Washington creating an unprecedented time in our history. Highway construction projects are no exception, necessitating close cooperation and collaboration between WSDOT, our Contractors, and Labor to ensure the health and safety of everyone working on our projects.

Shown below is a draft of a letter that will be going out today from our Project Engineers to all contractors that have active WSDOT projects. We are sharing this with all Contractors who do business with WSDOT so that everyone is aware of the steps we are taking.

For Contractors that have active projects, we are requesting that response plans be developed for each active project, specifically outlining the steps being taken to create a safe environment at the worksite. This needs to be a collaborative effort between management, the employees and WSDOT, with the resulting plans demonstrating that the actions meet the most current COVID-19 guidelines.

Time is of the essence. We are requesting that these plans be developed, communicated and implementation commencing by Monday, March 23rd. With the ever-changing landscape associated with the virus, we fully expect that the plans will need to be modified regularly as the situation continues to develop. It is critical that there is open communication and dialogue with employees, and that the plans are fully implemented.

As outlined in the draft letter, WSDOT will be willing to share in the direct costs associated with the measures being implemented. We are asking all parties to be flexible and collaborative during this time of crisis. We very much appreciate working closely with all of our partners as we address this extremely challenging issue.

There is a multitude of resources available on line. Here are a few links you may find helpful.

<https://www.osha.gov/>

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/Workplace>

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Sincerely,
Chris Christopher
WSDOT State Construction Engineer

Draft Letter from WSDOT PE to the Contractor

The Standard Specification section #1-07.1 assigns the responsibility for the health and safety of all workers to the Contractor. As construction activities continue during this pandemic, specialized plans and protocols need to be in place to maintain safe and healthful worksites. You have likely already taken steps in this direction.

In addition to existing health, safety, and sanitation regulations, the United States and the State of Washington have instituted additional proclamations and rules surrounding the COVID –19 virus that must be followed. To demonstrate compliance with applicable requirements, [WSDOT Contractor] shall provide written correspondence by Monday, March 23 describing project-specific safety plan(s) outlining additional procedures and measures that will be put in place. Implementation shall proceed no later than Monday March 23. This correspondence shall also affirm that project-specific plans, measures, procedures and training have been provided to all workers. As we are all aware, this pandemic is evolving rapidly and when warranted, it is expected that the project-specific safety plan(s) be updated to reflect the most current rules in effect.

A mandatory joint safety check-in shall occur on Monday March 23rd and shall include contractor project management, subcontractors, employees, and the WSDOT Project Engineer Office. This communication shall provide for a discussion, answer questions, coordinate the details of our respective safety plans, address concerns and solicit additional ways we can cooperatively maintain a safe environment for everyone. We will need to be creative in how we perform this communication within the guidelines.

This effort will result in mutual benefits to you, your workers, WSDOT and the citizens of the state of Washington by allowing continued construction activities in conditions where workers are safe and appropriately protected from the threat of COVID-19. WSDOT recognizes that there is a cost for additional safety measures, devices and personal protective equipment. Again, these added measures will benefit both parties and WSDOT is offering to share in those direct costs through a change order. Please notify WSDOT in advance to pursue that option.

WSDOT recognizes that there may be conditions where COVID-19 exposure cannot be reasonably mitigated. The contract contemplates these situations and provides for a contractor initiated request for additional time under the conditions specified by Standard Specification section #1-08.8.

There is a multitude of resources available on line. Here are a few links you may find helpful.

<https://www.osha.gov/>

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/Workplace>

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Thank you in advance for your attention and efforts in this critical situation.