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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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March 25, 2020

Dear Municipal Chief Executive Officer:

I write to provide guidance regarding the effect of the Governor's March 23, 2020 Order "Assuring Continued Operation of Essential Services in the Commonwealth, Closing Certain Workplaces, and Prohibiting Gatherings of More than 10 People" insofar as the Order intersects with municipal efforts to address the COVID-19 crisis.

The Governor's Essential Services Order has two functions. First, the Order closes a broad range of public spaces, workplaces, and other establishments in order to reduce unnecessary movement of Commonwealth residents outside of the home and, in so doing, limit the spread of this highly contagious and potentially deadly virus. Second, the Order designates a range of critical services and functions as "COVID-19 Essential Services" to ensure their continued operation during the state of emergency in order to protect the public health and welfare of the Commonwealth and support community resilience and continuity of response efforts. Correspondingly, the Order designates workers engaged in delivering these critical services and functions as members of the "COVID-19 Essential Workforce." Taken together, these designations seek to ensure that COVID-19 Essential Services continue without interruption during the period of the declared emergency.

The Baker-Polito Administration recognizes the value of local decision making in most circumstances. Nevertheless, ensuring an effective response to the COVID-19 emergency requires the Administration to prioritize consistency and clarity of action. A key requirement of any effective, statewide response will be that public officials avoid conflicting directives and duplication of efforts. The Massachusetts Civil Defense Act, the authority under which the Governor issued the Order, reflects the necessity for unified statewide directives in a time of crisis. Section 8A of the Act provides that that any rule, regulation, ordinance or by-law issued by a municipality or other political subdivision of the Commonwealth "shall be inoperative" to the extent that such provision is inconsistent with any order issued by the Governor during the period of the emergency.

Accordingly, the Order the Governor signed on Monday includes the following provision to ensure unitary management of this crisis:

This Order supersedes and makes inoperative any order or rule issued by a municipality that will or might in any way impede or interfere with the achievement of the objectives of this Order. With respect to work and travel in particular, any order or rule issued by a municipality is hereby made inoperative to the extent: (1) such municipal order or rule will or might interfere with provisions of this Order ensuring the continued operation of COVID-19 Essential Services; or (2) such municipal order or rule will or might interfere with the free travel anywhere within the Commonwealth of any person who is a member of any COVID-19 Essential Workforce where such travel is made in connection with the ongoing operation of COVID-19 Essential Services.

One important area in which the potential for conflict has presented itself is in questions surrounding the continuing operation of construction projects. A number of municipalities have announced policies to address construction work during the state of emergency that conflict with the terms of the Order. Exhibit A of the Order contains two entries that designate construction projects as COVID-19 Essential Services and identify workers engaged in construction projects as included within the Order's COVID-19 Essential Workforce:

- Guidance: Workers – including contracted vendors – involved in the construction of critical or strategic infrastructure including public works construction, airport operations, water, sewer, gas, electrical, nuclear, oil refining and other critical energy services, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, and internet, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services)
- Guidance: Construction Workers who support the construction, operation, inspection, and maintenance of construction sites and construction projects (including housing construction)

Accordingly, the Order provides that all construction projects are to “continue operations during the state of emergency, but to do so with allowance for social distancing protocols consistent with guidance provided by the Department of Public Health.” Local policies, regulations, or directives that provide otherwise are in direct conflict with the Order and should be withdrawn.

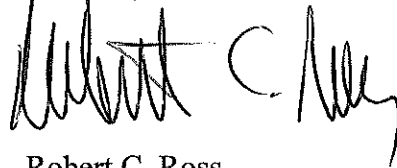
The Baker-Polito Administration is aware that cities and towns and local Boards of Health quite sensibly have raised questions about how to manage the health risks of COVID-19 in the context of an active construction site. In order to address these same concerns, Commonwealth agencies that undertake horizontal and vertical construction have adopted a detailed set of safety practices for all construction projects sponsored or managed by their agencies. The Commonwealth also plans to ensure that each project sponsored or managed by a state agency observes a “safety stand-down day” within the next week. This stand-down is

designed to ensure that all workers involved in the project are familiar with the health safety practices required for the continued operation of Commonwealth construction projects. I am attaching the Commonwealth's construction site safety policy to this guidance for your review. The Administration encourages all cities and towns to issue similar requirements for construction projects undertaken by private owners.

Unitary management in this crisis will be essential to ensuring an appropriate balance statewide between taking actions necessary to combat the spread of COVID-19 and avoiding unnecessary hardships to the public and supporting community resilience over the weeks and months it may take for this crisis to run its course. The economic disruption and interruption in critical services and functions that could result from halting construction projects abruptly would be felt statewide and not simply in the locality where a particular project sits. For these reasons, construction projects should continue as long as they observe social distancing protocols and otherwise can continue to operate safely.

The Baker-Polito Administration recognizes and values the unceasing efforts of local officials to support an effective statewide response to COVID-19. We will continue to work with cities and towns to ensure a consistent application of the Governor's Essential Services Order and to provide for effective enforcement of proper COVID-19 safety protocols at active construction sites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Ross", written over a horizontal line.

Robert C. Ross
Chief Legal Counsel

Cc: Geoffrey Beckwith, Massachusetts Municipal Association

Enclosure



Commonwealth of Massachusetts COVID-19 GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL CONSTRUCTION SITES AND WORKERS AT ALL PUBLIC WORK

These Guidelines and Procedures MUST be implemented at all times on all construction sites. All construction sites MUST conduct a Safety Stand Down day to disseminate these Guidelines to all employees and workers.

Employee Health Protection – ZERO Tolerance

The following applies to both State employees and contracted staff working on behalf of the State.

- ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SICK WORKERS REPORTING TO WORK. IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME! IF YOU FEEL SICK, GO HOME! IF YOU SEE SOMEONE SICK, SEND THEM HOME!
- If you are exhibiting any of the symptoms below, you are to report this to your supervisor (via phone, text or email) right away, and head home from the job site or stay home if already there.

If you notice a co-worker showing signs or complaining about such symptoms, he or she should be directed to their supervisor (via phone, text or email) and asked to leave the project site immediately.

COVID-19 Typical Symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Sore Throat
- Prior to starting a shift, each employee will self-certify to their supervisor that they:
 - Have no signs of a fever or a measured temperature above 100.3 degrees or greater, a cough or trouble breathing within the past 24 hours.
 - Have not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for about 15 minutes, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic.
 - Have not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official.
- Workers that are working in a confined space or inside a closed building envelope will have to be temperature screened by a Medical Professional or Trained Individual provided that such screening is out of public view to respect privacy and results are kept private.
- Employees exhibiting symptoms or unable to self-certify should be directed to leave the work site and seek medical attention and applicable testing by their health care provider. They are not to return to the work site until cleared by a medical professional.

General On-the-Job Guidance to Prevent Exposure & Limit the Transmission of the Virus

- No handshaking
- Wash hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol
- Contractor and State Agency Field Offices are locked down to all but authorized personnel
- Each jobsite should develop cleaning and decontamination procedures that are posted and shared. These Procedures must cover all areas including trailers, gates, equipment, vehicles, etc. and shall be posted at all entry points to the sites, and throughout the project site.
- A “No Congregation” policy is in effect, individuals must implement social distancing by maintaining a minimum distance of 6-feet from other individuals
- Avoid face to face meetings – critical situations requiring in-person discussion must follow social distancing
- Conduct all meetings via conference calls, if possible. Do not convene meetings of more than 10 people. Recommend use of cell phones, texting, web meeting sites and conference calls for project discussion
- All individual work crew meetings/tailgate talks should be held outside and follow social distancing
- Please keep all crews a minimum of 6’ apart at all times to eliminate the potential of cross contamination
- At each job briefing/tool box talk, employees are asked if they are experiencing any symptoms, and are sent home if they are
- Each jobsite should have laminated COVID-19 safety guidelines and handwashing instructions
- All restroom facilities/porta-potties should be cleaned and handwashing stations must be provided with soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels
- All surfaces should be regularly cleaned, including surfaces, door handles, laptops, etc.
- All common areas and meeting areas are to be regularly cleaned and disinfected at least once a day but preferably twice a day
- Be sure to use your own water bottle, and do not share
- To avoid external contamination, we recommend everyone bring food from home
- Please maintain Social Distancing separation during breaks and lunch.
- Cover coughing or sneezing with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash hands, if no tissue is available then cough into your elbow
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands
- To avoid sharing germs, please clean up after Yourself. DO NOT make others responsible for moving, unpacking and packing up your personal belongings
- If you or a family member is feeling ill, stay home!

Work Site Risk Prevention Practices

- At the start of each shift, confirm with all employees that they are healthy.
- We will have a 100% glove policy from today going forward. All construction workers will be required to wear cut-resistant gloves or the equivalent.
- Use of eye protection (safety goggles/face shields) is recommended
- In work conditions where required social distancing is impossible to achieve affected employees shall be supplied PPE including as appropriate a standard face mask, gloves, and eye protection.
- All employees shall drive to work site/parking area in a single occupant vehicle. Contractors / State staff shall not ride together in the same vehicle
- When entering a machine or vehicle which you are not sure you were the last person to enter, make sure that you wipe down the interior and door handles with disinfectant prior to entry
- In instances where it is possible, workers should maintain separation of 6' from each other per CDC guidelines.
- Multi person activities will be limited where feasible (two person lifting activities)
- Large gathering places on the site such as shacks and break areas will be eliminated and instead small break areas will be used with seating limited to ensure social distancing.
- Contact the cleaning person for your office trailer or office space and ensure they have proper COVID-19 sanitation processes. Increase their cleaning visits to daily
- Clean all high contact surfaces a minimum of twice a day in order to minimize the spread of germs in areas that people touch frequently. This includes but is not limited to desks, laptops and vehicles

Wash Stations: All site-specific projects with outside construction sites without ready access to an indoor bathroom MUST install Wash Stations.

- Install hand wash stations with hot water, if possible, and soap at fire hydrants or other water sources to be used for frequent handwashing for all onsite employees
- All onsite workers must help to maintain and keep stations clean
- If a worker notices soap or towels are running low or out, immediately notify supervisors
- Garbage barrels will be placed next to the hand wash station for disposal of tissues/towels

Do all you can to maintain your good health by: getting adequate sleep; eating a balanced, healthy diet, avoid alcohol; and consume plenty of fluids.

Please Note: This document is not intended to replace any formalized procedures currently in place with the General Contractor.

Where these guidance does not meet or exceed the standards put forth by the General Contractor, everyone shall abide by the most stringent procedure available.

A site-specific COVID-19 Officer (who may also be the Health and Safety Officer) shall be designated for every site.

The approved project Health and Safety Plan (HASP) shall be modified to require that the Contractor's site-specific project COVID-19 Officer submit a written daily report to the Owner's Representative. The COVID-19 Officer shall certify that the contractor and all subcontractors are in full compliance with these guidelines.

Any issue of non-compliance with these guidelines shall be a basis for the suspension of work. The contractor will be required to submit a corrective action plan detailing each issue of non-conformance and a plan to rectify the issue(s). The contractor will not be allowed to resume work until the plan is approved by the Owner. Any additional issues of non-conformance may be subject to action against the contractor's prequalification and certification status.

