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## **Protecting workers, job sites and the general public against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) - by Morris Napolitano**

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With the recent appearance and rapid spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) globally, a potentially fatal respiratory illness, it's time to prepare and train construction firms and workers to fortify job sites not only to protect themselves against the virus but the general public as well. The Environmental Contractors Association (ECA), alongside its CERT Safety Remediation Courses, specialize in teaching construction firms and workers how to protect against environmental hazards, especially biohazard contaminants.

Here are a few ways you can protect yourself, your job site and most of all the general public.

### What to Look Out For

For confirmed cases of the Coronavirus, reported symptoms have varied from case to case, but average symptoms at this time include fever, cough and shortness of breath. According to the Center for Disease Control, symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as many as 14 since exposure.

If someone on your site, or someone you know, begins to exhibit symptoms, contact a healthcare professional immediately. After isolating the individual, it is important to focus on the rest of the site to ensure containment of the virus. In a situation like this, site leaders should immediately close down the site and monitor individuals who may have been exposed and begin the process of cleaning the entire site to halt the spread.

Due to the virus's unknown origins and nature, it is imperative that you take extreme health and safety precautions when interacting with potentially infected individuals.

### How to Protect Yourself and Others

While leading medical experts are still developing a vaccine to protect against the Coronavirus, there are still ways to avoid exposure and reduce the risk of infection from the virus.

To help prevent against the Coronavirus you can take the following measures including, avoiding close contact with people who may be infected, avoiding the touching of your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, covering your mouth or nose with a tissue or with your arm when coughing or sneezing, regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched objects with a disinfecting spray or wipe, using facemasks if you show symptoms to protect others from infection and wash hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.

While there is currently no specific treatment for the Coronavirus, people with symptoms should immediately seek out emergency medical care. People who think they may have been in contact with those infected with the Coronavirus should contact a healthcare provider immediately.

#### How to Protect Your Jobsite

By putting the health and safety of your team first, construction firms can feel prepared, knowledgeable and ready for any biological threats, especially the fast-approaching Coronavirus.

ECA understands this and, outside of their CERT trainings, offers 24/7 emergency response service including infectious organism cleaning and bacteria/biological emergencies, complete removal of hazardous materials and debris, emergency assessment, cleaning and repairs, 24-hour emergency response call centers and asbestos, mold and lead abatement, as well as fire and flood restoration services.

#### What Can You Do Now?

While the risk to the United States is currently low, this is the time to gain skills and expertise in handling biological hazards before it's too late.

The ECA is building awareness when it comes to infectious airborne pathogens, like the Coronavirus, to help reduce liability and costs for owners and manager, especially in the healthcare industry.

As many healthcare institutions continue to cut back costs, they still strive to provide high levels of safety and cleanliness for patients. Preventing the harmful impact of infectious organisms in these sensitive areas is crucial and the expertise of trained professionals is necessary.

CERT Courses are intended to provide anyone interested with the opportunity to learn. This includes courses geared towards the general public that provide a general overview of potential threats, how to spot them and swiftly respond, while professional courses will provide advanced knowledge on pathogen containment.

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