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## **When our industry re-opens safety will be a is priority - by Peter Gormley**

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Peter Gormley

We live in interesting times. Tragically, for many of us and for our communities, this is a time of illness, loss of life, loss of employment, isolation and fear. Our hearts go out to the many who have been devastated by this pandemic and our gratitude goes to all those who serve our society in the midst of an evasive foe. Our first responders and medical providers, the grocery store workers, truckers, sanitation workers and many other essential services that we all rely on allow most of us to maintain the basic necessities for living.

And one of the essential services is construction. And while that may provide positive business activity as some projects continue, it comes with much uncertainty and concern around safety for our people as well questions about how to proceed on each site. With limited scientific data, we do our best to plot a course that allows us to sleep at night and perform our contractual obligations. Many subcontractors are performing little to no work. Cash flow is a priority and layoffs and furloughs are rampant.

ASM recognizes what a challenging time this is for subcontractors and fortunately, there is much the Association can do to help. Through our communications to members, member forums and webinars, and constant communication with industry partners and government, we have sought to provide up-to-date information and guidance as it becomes available. Where possible, we seek to participate in creating useable safety standards that will allow our members to plan and implement the changes required to perform construction in this new world. We will continue to support our members through the shutdown and help them to be best positioned for when re-opening starts. We don't yet know what that re-opening will look like, though we know that it will likely happen in phases and we know that safety will be the priority. ASM members are using this time to prepare for this shift.

What do we need to pay attention to? Safety, obviously. But what about elevated costs in performing our work, reduced productivity and delays that are not due to subcontractor non-performance. HR issues, PPP forgiveness (if you were fortunate enough to receive a loan), ever-shifting safety protocols. The list goes on. Does any of this sound familiar? Twelve-hour days, COVID-19 updates, PPP updates/applications/frustration, unemployment updates, construction shut-downs, Zoom calls that satisfy or drain you, lack of PPE, too much email and working from home with distractions all around.

This is the time where an Association can provide the most support for members. No company is alone in trying to navigate the impact of this pandemic on their business. There is strength in joining together in facing this common challenge. For 70 years ASM has worked hard to help subcontractors succeed in a complex and changing industry. This certainly is a time of change and ASM members are continuing to show the resiliency that makes them leaders in the construction industry.

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