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Construction safety planning and our new normal - by Rebecca Jablonowski

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New rules, new regulations, and a new deck of cards have been handed to us—and are changing how we manage projects as owner’s project managers (OPMs).

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Construction projects are resuming, but will require new management innovations and safety oversight. The lens we use to view safety on jobsites will never be the same.

Logistics development and review

A new view of logistics planning now includes details on social distancing, testing of workers upon entry to jobsites, and material deliveries. The standard of having the contractor create a logistics plan at the time of bid should now be adjusted for a team approach to development with involvement by infection control experts.

Planning and protocol creation

Every state will have new requirements. In Massachusetts, for example, each contractor is tasked to create a significantly more robust safety plan focused on COVID-19 best practices. This new plan will be submitted to the Commonwealth for approval prior to mobilizing workers.

Tools and innovations

With the need for change comes innovation. Architecture, engineering, and construction (AEC) companies large and small are developing cutting edge technologies to meet the need of the new requirements. As owners’ representatives, Stantec has a unique opportunity to pair clients with the right team members to bring those innovations onto projects.

Implementation of safety plans and compliance surveys

The new safety requirements are created, submitted, and approved. Now what? The next step is for clients to partner with organizations to oversee implementation and conduct regular compliance surveys to ensure the plan is being maintained.

COVID-19 cost impact and project budgeting

In this time of uncertainty one thing is for sure, the new requirements will result in a new way to control procurement. Lengthened schedules, more dedication from safety managers, supply chain impacts, and additional site cleaning are just a few of the list of items to be added to bids, and the costs are very real. As we continue to track and evaluate cost impacts from our construction manager partners, we can inform the total project budget with the necessary owner-controlled risk contingencies and advise on appropriate sunset dates.

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