

# **COVID-19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN MINING AND QUARRYING OPERATIONS**

**March 2020**

Due to the health crisis caused by COVID-19, companies in the extractives sector can and should continue to operate in accordance with guidance issued by the Government and Ministry of Health.

It is essential to combine the containment of the virus with the maintenance of economic activity and the protection of the health of workers.

This document will be updated, if necessary, in accordance with the recommendations of the Health authorities as they are made public.

## **1. ABOUT COVID-19**

The route of transmission between humans is considered similar to that described for other coronaviruses through the secretions from infected people, mainly from direct contact with respiratory drops of more than 5 microns (capable of transmission over distances of up to 2 metres) and hands or clothes contaminated with these secretions followed by contact with the mucosa of the mouth, nose or eyes.

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause infection in humans and in a variety of animals, including birds and mammals such as camels, cats, and bats. It is a disease zoonotic, which means that they can be transmitted from animals to man. Coronaviruses that affect Human (HCoV) can produce clinical conditions ranging from the common cold to more serious ones such as those produced by the respiratory syndrome viruses Acute Severe (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV).

The incubation period of the disease in the first cases has been estimated between 4 and 7 days with a 5-day average, but based on knowledge of other Betacoronaviruses, MERS-CoV, and SARS-CoV, it could be from 2 to 14 days.

So far, the source of infection is unknown and there is uncertainty regarding severity and transmission capacity. For similarity to other known coronaviruses, SARS-CoV-2 is thought to be transmitted mainly by respiratory drops of more than 5 microns and by direct contact with the secretions from infected people. The period of Incubation of the disease has been estimated between 2 and 14 days.

## **2. GENERAL ISSUES**

Depending on the nature of your activities the risk of exposure to COVID-19 can vary greatly.

To avoid the risk of contagion of the COVID-19 virus in a mine or quarry, a series of preventive measures are essential to ensure that the probability of the virus spreading between people is greatly reduced.

In mining operations, it is not possible for the vast majority of the jobs to be conducted on-line or remotely, so a business continuity plan must be drawn up. Companies should be encouraged to have flexible hours and staggered work shifts, where possible, to reduce worker concentrations.

It is also necessary to avoid face-to-face meetings and to facilitate, as far as possible, work by video or teleconference. This includes all workers (own and subcontracted), as well as service providers that access your site.

Companies must analyse the following issues:

- The need to update your Worker Health risk assessment.
- Procedures to follow in the event that a worker becomes ill (or has direct contact with a sick person), to protect the health of other workers and maintain activity.
- If there is an accumulation of cases, procedures for shutting down the operation.
- Communication to workers. This should minimise risks associated with exposure to COVID 19, as well as communicating what preventive measures are to be implemented.
- Hygiene and cleaning measures for workers.
- Hygiene and cleaning measures at workplaces and common areas (changing room, toilets, dining room, office).
- The management of sanitary waste.
- The specific preventive measures to be adopted for specific tasks on site.

### 3. COMMON GENERAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL JOBS (EXAMPLES)

- If you have been unwell due to COVID 19 declared or suspected or if you have had close contact with a case, **YOU MUST NOT COME TO WORK** and must immediately notify the company by phone or email. It is considered "close contact" when you have been at a distance less than two metres of a probable or confirmed case.

If the following symptoms occur: fever, tiredness and dry cough, it is recommended you consult your GP via telephone. Some also suffer from pain, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhoea. You should also impose self-isolation in your home for 14 days. In addition to these symptoms, if you have difficulty breathing (dyspnea), you should call the COVID-19 Healthline on **0800 358 5433**.

- Workers who suffer from any of the causes that make them especially sensitive to COVID-19: respiratory conditions (asthma, chronic bronchitis, etc.) or heart, hypertension, diabetes, immune disorders, kidney problems, pregnancy or breastfeeding, or in chemotherapy or immunosuppressant treatment must report this to their supervisor so that adequate protection can be provided.
- If a worker presents symptoms compatible with the contagion mentioned above while at work, in particular: fever, cough, respiratory difficulties, they will be required to leave site and self-isolate. The work area occupied by the worker will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Workers who have maintained close contact with the affected person will maintain their normal activity but carry out active surveillance of their state of health and limit their social exposure.
- Personal hygiene measures must be reinforced in all work areas. Hand hygiene is the main measure of infection prevention and control. The workers will wash their hands frequently, for 40 to 60 seconds, cleaning them with soap and water or hydroalcoholic solutions. If the hands are visibly clean, hand hygiene will be done preferably with alcohol-based products. If they are dirty or stained with fluids, it will be done with water and antiseptic soap.
- When coughing or sneezing, the mouth and nose should be covered with the elbow flexed or with a disposable handkerchief which is thrown away immediately into a garbage container.
- Anyone with respiratory symptoms should wash their hands frequently as you may accidentally come into contact with secretions or surfaces contaminated with secretions.
- Washing hands with soap and water or with an alcohol-based solution, should be performed after being in contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects or materials.

- Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth, with or without gloves, since your hands facilitate transmission.
- Avoid handshakes or hugs.
- Latex or nitrile gloves (depending on allergies) must be available at all times for your use and pay special attention to the removal and disposal of these. In the case of using safety work gloves, use latex or nitrile gloves underneath them.
- Enclosed spaces (rooms, offices, common areas, etc.) must be ventilated at least for fifteen minutes a day.
- The number of people in enclosed spaces should be limited by introducing shifts and schedules for the use of changing rooms, toilets, crib rooms or other similar areas, in order to maintain the established safety distances, and thus avoid workers being less than 2 metres away.
- As far as possible, the workday should be arranged to avoid coinciding meal breaks.
- Cutlery, glasses, plates, etc. should not be shared.
- Drinks or food should not be shared either.
- The general cleaning of the common areas will be reinforced: toilets, changing rooms, crib rooms, etc., with the right products. Lye and ammonia are two essential basic elements that fulfil the function of disinfectants. Bleach is recommended for all those areas such as toilets, taps, sinks, and contact surfaces. Cleaning can be done with detergent and disinfection with sodium hypochlorite solution with a concentration of 0.1%, 62-71% ethanol or 0.5% hydrogen peroxide.
- Gloves should be used when cleaning, preferably nitrile and disposable.
- Face-to-face meetings or meetings of several people should be prohibited, where you cannot maintain the 2m distance between the attendees.
- Preference will be given to communications between operators via 2-way radio or similar, provided that this is possible.
- In terms of maintenance, ensure all hand tools are cleaned with the sanitary material or bleach or ammonia solutions prior to use. Protective gloves must be used.

#### **4. SPECIFIC OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS BY TASK**

Below are specific instructions for tasks in mining operation and quarrying operations:

##### **A. Additional prevention instructions for mobile plant operators**

- At the end of the working day, the cabin and the grip points for access (ladders and knob door) on heavy mobile machinery and vehicles should be cleaned before finishing work.

##### **B. Additional prevention instructions for administration personnel and weighbridge operators**

- Organise space so that the distance between workstations is as large as possible and at least 2 metres. As far as possible, set up the workspace so that workers are not facing each other.
- Do not share objects without cleaning them beforehand (staplers, scissors etc.)
- Clean the contact points of the photocopier before and after use.
- Sanitary gloves should be used to touch commonly used surfaces.

It will be mandatory to wash your hands every time you enter the office or touch the doors or other common surfaces.

- In the case of weighbridge operators or other cases where it is necessary to attend to third parties direct contact should be avoided. The installation of a physical barrier type screen that prevents contact is recommended. Another simple option is to pass documents through the window for signature and return. In the case of payments, payment by card will be sought instead of payment with money in cash. In the case of not having a screen or options for visitors not to access offices, the person should be asked to wait for the issuance of the document outside.

#### C. Additional prevention instructions for operators / maintenance personnel

- Everyone should clean their work area (table, keyboard, mouse, screens, control panel, points with which you have come into direct contact, etc.) at the beginning and end of your shift.
- Work areas should be limited to one person and, if this cannot be the case, you must comply with the minimum safety distance of 2 metres.
- It will be mandatory to wash your hands every time you enter the premises or facilities and touch any doors .