

Ont. association establishes best practice guide during COVID-19 pandemic



Companies need to make sure that they are communicating any policy changes with all levels related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (or [RESCON](#)) has released a “best practices” guide and urges all employers to follow it during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Safety has and always will be the industry’s top priority,” said Richard Lyall, RESCON president. “Site safety is the builders’ responsibility and they must work with sub-trades employers to ensure all on-site workers and worksites are safe.”

“As always, the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) allows workers to refuse unsafe work. This longstanding workplace protection has not changed,” added Patrick McManus, acting executive director with the [Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association](#).

“As a new normal emerges and the construction industry adapts, we recommend a case-by-case and site-by-site approach to new and enhanced safety protocols, rather than a blanket approach to construction by officials.”

The RESCON best practices guide includes seven safety recommendations developed by health and safety experts. They come from a document called “COVID-19: What you need to know about Health and Safety and Working On-Site.”

They include:

1. Maintain good personal hygiene;
2. On-site sanitation – all employers have the obligation to provide access to handwashing stations with soap and water, washroom facilities, commonly touched surfaces or areas, and an increased cleaning schedule;
3. Practice physical distancing;
4. Communicate policies – employers must ensure everyone on site has a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities in health and safety;
5. Protect family and roommates – on-site workers should wash clothes when returning home;
6. Report illness to a supervisor and call public health immediately, followed by going home and self-isolating for 14 days; and
7. Track sick workers – this will allow employers to better inform public health professionals.

About 400,000 people work in the Ontario construction industry.