



## **Construction industry needs to be vigilant during second wave of COVID-19**

Oct. 13, 2020, Vaughan, Ont. – Construction industry employers and workers must remain vigilant as cases of COVID-19 continue to rise. That was the takeaway from a webinar today sponsored by the [Residential Construction Council of Ontario \(RESCON\)](#) and several industry partners.

“It is important for the construction industry to remain united, resist complacency and continue to follow best practices, regulations and public health guidelines as we battle the pandemic,” says RESCON VP Andrew Pariser who emceed the webinar. “The industry did an incredible job mitigating the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites, but we need to be prepared for the second wave.

“Ontario’s economy depends on construction and we must continue to take the lead. We know what to expect and what to do. The task now is to implement and execute.”

The virtual event, titled *Protecting Your Workforce during the Second Wave: COVID in Construction*, provided participants with information to keep worksites and offices safe and operating. Labour, Training and Skills Development Minister Monte McNaughton and Chief Prevention Officer Ron Kelusky spoke and there were panel discussions with industry leaders on best practices.

McNaughton thanked the industry for working together and developing protocols early in the pandemic, but he noted that the fight is not over and it’s important to communicate and share best practices.

“We have to remain vigilant and protect workers and the public as we face this second wave of the pandemic,” McNaughton said in his remarks. “We have to work together as we have to turn the tide.”

Kelusky said modelling shows the caseload is expected to increase, so the industry has to keep its guard up and workers must continue to maintain physical distancing and follow health and safety protocols. “Safety is our priority,” he said. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

The event featured a panel on best practices with Gilliam Group president Craig Lesurf, Infrastructure Health and Safety Association president Enzo Garritano, and Tribute Communities senior manager of health and safety Ketan Patel. A second panel on what companies should do in the event of a confirmed case featured Maple Reindeers national health and safety manager Craig Sparks, Tridel health and safety manager Daniel dos Santos, and ConDrain Group health and safety manager Darrin Husack. Dan Fleming, manager GTA at NORCAT, moderated the second panel.

The panelists noted that:

- Resources related to COVID-19 best practices are available at [ihsa.ca](https://ihsa.ca).
- Companies should continually update their risk assessment protocols.
- Everybody on a worksite must be educated about best practices to follow.
- Social distancing must be adhered to on worksites and staggered shifts are a good idea.
- Companies should continue to share best practices with one another.
- Stickers and posters on worksites are good reminders for workers.
- Communication is key on a worksite because safety is not proprietary.
- A group email is one way to keep workers informed of any changes on a site.
- Contractors should keep protocols and rules consistent across multiple sites.
- The industry must learn from the first wave and make the necessary adjustments.
- Having a plan in place makes it easier to respond to a confirmed case.

David Frame, director of government relations at the Ontario General Contractors Association, provided closing remarks at the webinar. He noted that health and safety is always a priority for the construction industry and contractors are committed to working with government to keep worksites safe.

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