

## **ALCC Landscape Industry Guidance for Business Operations During COVID-19 in Colorado** (Revised 04/20/20)

The Colorado landscape industry, including lawn care, landscape maintenance, design/build, tree care, and irrigation and water management, takes employee and client safety and health very seriously, employing regular safety training and enforcing strong safety standards on the job, following Federal guidelines. Landscape Industry firms use regularly scheduled employee training and adherence to Federal, state, and local safety and health standards to mitigate hazardous exposures at landscape work sites.

Landscape professionals maintain and protect the living environments around hospitals, government facilities, housing areas, parks, schools, and more, protecting public safety by:

- performing regular maintenance to mow, prune, control weeds, and inspect for safety and security issues
- performing essential treatments to reduce the spread of dangerous and deadly diseases transmitted by pests like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas
- removing fallen trees and mitigating overhead hazards from wind effects
- providing maintenance and plant removal to assist in fire abatement
- managing invasive species
- keeping public and private pathways free from obstruction, including snow removal and other potential risk

The nature of landscape work, which is performed outdoors, individually, or in small teams with little public contact poses a lower risk of spreading COVID-19. According to OSHA classifications, the landscape industry falls in the “lower risk” category of exposure (the lowest level on their occupational classification of risk for COVID-19).

Landscape Industry companies are instructed to follow all Federal, State, and Local public health and safety directives. The following guidance for the Landscape Industry during COVID-19 have been developed according to OSHA and CDC guidelines and should be observed during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

### **Know the Symptoms of COVID-19**

- Coughing, fever, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing.
- Early symptoms may include chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose. If you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, DO NOT GO TO WORK and call your healthcare provider immediately. Do the same thing if you come into close contact with someone showing these symptoms.

### **Sanitation and Safety**

COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus is also believed to spread by people touching a contaminated surface or object and then touching one’s mouth, nose, or possibly the eyes. Employers and workers

should follow these general practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to help prevent exposure to coronavirus:

- Require employees to wash hands with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds. If soap and running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. All job sites will have a designated area for hand washing. (e.g. an existing hose with approved soap along with a containment for the gray water. Or foot pump hand washing station)
- All trucks will have hand sanitizer available for the crew along with cleaning wipes.
- Implement social distancing (staying at least 6' feet apart).
- Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick and avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Strongly recommend mandatory temperature check—and document it—prior to beginning work in the morning. Any employee with a temperature over 100.4 F is required to return home not return until they have been asymptomatic for 72 hrs. If diagnosed as positive for COVID-19, they should not return to work until a medical professional has provided written notice that it is safe to do so.
- Strongly recommend wearing non-medical cloth face coverings that cover the nose and mouth while working, except where doing so would inhibit that individual's health. To the extent possible, wear gloves when in contact with customers or goods if gloves are provided to workers by their employer. UPDTE: Colorado Governor [mandated use of mask and gloves for workers in Critical Businesses and Critical Government Functions on April 17, 2020](#).
- Encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure.
- Identify and isolate potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting workers, customers, and others at a worksite.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

**Institute and enforce strict sanitation standards.** Clean and disinfect all work environments and personal protective equipment daily, including machine handles, tools, safety glasses, safety vests, gloves, and soles of boots. Commonly touched surfaces include but are not limited to: door handles and grab bars, instrument panels, steering wheels, and devices such as cell phones.

- Clean and disinfect frequently used tools and equipment on a regular basis. This includes other elements of the jobsite where possible. Employees should regularly do the same in their assigned work areas.
- Clean shared spaces such as trailers and break/lunchrooms at least once per day.
- Disinfect shared surfaces (door handles, machinery controls, etc.) on a regular basis.
- Avoid sharing tools with co-workers. If not, disinfect before and after each use.
- Wear the proper PPE.
- Keep the dust down by using engineering and work practice controls, specifically through the use of water delivery and dust collection systems.

**When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectants with claims against emerging viral pathogens.**

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, PPE). Where possible, **initiate engineering controls to isolate employees from work-related hazards.** In workplaces where they are appropriate, these types of controls reduce exposure to hazards without relying on worker behavior and can be the most cost-effective solution to implement. Engineering controls for SARS-CoV-2 include: installing high-efficiency air filters and increasing ventilation rates in the work environment. Install physical barriers, such as clear plastic and sneeze guards where appropriate.

## **Employee Protocols**

**Support Staff and Office Personnel Companies** should establish internal policies and practices, including teleworking or flexible work hours (staggered shifts), that reduce the number of employees at a facility at one time. Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.

All employees who are not required to be on customer sites performing landscape or those employees assigned to the critical and continued operation of the business entity should be considered for working remotely.

Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies. Maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Relax policies that require notes from physicians. However, if diagnosed as positive for COVID-19, employees should not return to work until a medical professional has provided written notice that it is safe to do so.

It is critical that individuals DO NOT report to work while they are experiencing illness symptoms including any of the following symptoms: such as; fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny/stuffy nose, body aches, nausea, chills, or fatigue. If an employee does experience any of these symptoms, they will notify their foreman or supervisor immediately so that appropriate follow-up actions can be taken.

People at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19 are urged to stay in their residence at all times except as necessary to seek medical care. People who are sick must stay in their residence except as necessary to seek medical care and must not go to work, even at an essential business.

Ensure that the company has the information technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees who may be able to work from home, and cross-train employees to perform other tasks to prepare for increased sick leave.

There should not be more than 5 employees on-site, and when employees are on site 6' social distancing should be strictly enforced. The offices should remain closed to the general public while this policy is in effect. Consider increasing janitorial services to assist in continuously disinfecting practices. Ensure that any training sessions and safety briefings are in a language that crew members can understand.



### **Crew and Field Staff**

Conduct safety training and staff meetings via video teleconferencing and discontinue group meetings and in-person trainings.

Location of work to be performed should be documented per individual to allow for contact tracing should someone become ill. Every employee should carry with them at all times a handbook outlining the requirements to work. This book will contain a copy of the authorization to work from the county or city they are working in.

Field crews must understand and be sensitive to the public's concern about COVID-19 transmission. Provide field staff with talking points to share with the public about their safety protocols and the essential nature of their work.

Even groups within the same project should avoid interaction across groups, to minimize possible viral spread if one worker contracts COVID-19. Approaches to avoid contact between groups may include staggered shifts, compressed work weeks where different teams work different days, and maximizing geographic distance between different teams working on the same project. Remind crew members to not congregate during breaks or lunch, always maintaining a 6' minimum distance between workers. Do not share meals or beverages. It is recommended that employees bring lunch or snacks to avoid unnecessary trips to stores, which can increase the risk of exposure to the virus.

Field teams should include the least number of employees that can safely carry out work at a site—no more than five people is recommended—and crew members should drive separately to the site whenever possible. Only the driver should be allowed to touch the controls anywhere in the vehicle. Gloves should be worn by employees when pumping gas.

Visitors outside the typical work crew should avoid interaction with the team wherever possible. For example, if an inspector or materials delivery needs to enter the site, they should alert the work team (e.g. by honking the horn of their vehicle twice or through another established communication means) so that the work team can vacate the site while the external parties are present.

### **Client Protocols**

Contact with clients should be executed via email, phone calls, video teleconference, when possible, and if personal contact is required, then maintain social distancing of 6' when on the property with the client or their customers or the general public. If in-person contact is required, then maintain social distancing of 6 feet at the client's or customer's property, or when communicating with the general public." Do not leave behind door hangers or other receipts.

In-person meetings should be avoided: office meetings and consultations should take place virtually, with participants working from home or their work truck, whenever possible. Communicate with clients about the current status of allowable work in your state or locality Explain the essential nature of landscape services and detail any operational changes due to COVID-19.

Provide clients 24-hour notification via phone or email that you will be servicing their property.