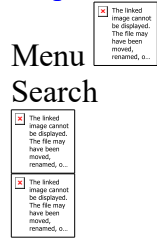


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Port Temporarily Suspends Ongoing Construction to Review COVID-19 Safety Plans

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April 8, 2020

The Port of Seattle will temporarily suspend approximately 20 current construction projects from Thursday, April 9 to Monday, April 13 to complete reviews and updates of contractors' jobsite safety plans, an action necessary to protect workers and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

The temporary suspension does not apply to Northwest Seaport Alliance projects.

The Port required all contractors to submit updated safety plans by March 27 to demonstrate how jobsites would implement public health recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect workers. In response to the latest recommendations by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the latest policy enforcement guidance from Washington State Division of Occupational Health and Safety, Labor & Industries, the Port opted to suspend ongoing construction projects until it completes its review.

While prime contractors are responsible overall for jobsite safety, the Port is committed to ensuring all workers are safe. We are working with public health officials and our labor partners to provide best practice guidance to our contractors. The Port will work to ensure that

contractors implement best practices to keep their workforce and, by extension, the broader community, safe.

Contractors have already implemented many public health recommendations including social distancing on worksites, additional sanitization, and urging high-risk employees, or anyone not feeling well, to stay home.

“Maintaining safety, health, and wellbeing is our top priority,” said Port of Seattle Executive Director Steve Metruck. “We need to work with our contractors so that they can establish effective safety plans and practices that can carry us forward for the next weeks and months. Our workers and the community will be better off now and in the long run if we pause now to get construction safety right.”

Port safety and construction teams, together with industrial hygienists, and input from labor leaders, are reviewing safety plans in light of guidance and industry best practices. The rapid spread of the virus has presented new challenges to contractors, labor representatives and project owners, such as the Port, in keeping job sites safe. If the Port identifies an issue with a project health and safety plan, the suspension may be extended for that project until the issues are resolved.

As one of the largest public sector builders in our region, the Port expects to spend more than \$3 billion on capital projects over the next five years to improve the efficiency, safety, and service at the region’s critical maritime and aviation trade and travel gateways. Governor Jay Inslee’s Stay Home, Stay Healthy order of March 23 made exemptions for “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers,” which includes many port aviation and maritime projects.

Contact

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