

 <p>SAFETY DIRECTIVE</p> <p>FROM:</p> <p><i>Charles G. Miller</i> DIRECTOR OF LABOR RELATIONS AND EMPLOYEE SAFETY</p> <p><i>4/7/2020</i> DATE</p>	<p>NUMBER: 2020-2</p> <p>SUBJECT:</p> <p>COVID-19 AND KEEPING SAFE IN THE WORKPLACE</p> <p>DISTRIBUTION:</p> <p>All Employees</p>
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As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, so does our collective resolve. The health and safety of our employees and motorists remains our top priority and the New York State Thruway is vital in the fight against this virus and to maintain the flow of goods for the economy. As such, our work at the Thruway Authority (Authority) to keep our highway safe and fully operational is essential. At the same time, it is equally important that we continually strive to perform those necessary functions as safely as possible. To that end, we are continuously reviewing the latest guidance from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for information on dealing with COVID-19 in the workplace to protect both Authority staff and the public.

Based on current OSHA guidance and DOH recommendations, the Authority has taken a comprehensive approach to minimize workplace hazards related to COVID-19. This includes:

- enhanced cleaning guidelines for the workplace;
- enhanced cleaning guidelines for personal workspace and recommendations for personal hygiene;
- reducing staff density in the workplace through changes in reporting and attendance requirements such as adjusting reporting days and times, reducing elapsed time during shifts, splitting work units, flexible reporting locations etc.; and
- maintaining social distancing wherever operationally possible.

These measures place our work locations at an overall low risk for exposure to COVID-19. OSHA and DOH have no additional requirements for other actions or additional personal protective equipment at this time. The routine use of N95 type masks is prioritized for medical and health professionals, and for those positive for COVID-19. Currently, any Authority staff either positive for COVID-19 or under a precautionary or mandatory quarantine must not come in to work.

While there is limited evidence that shows that face coverings protect individuals from getting the virus, it is widely accepted that they can help slow the spread. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission. CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure.

Based on this guidance, staff is permitted to use a cloth to cover their mouths and noses while on duty provided it does not restrict breathing or interfere with the safe execution of their duties. Examples of acceptable coverings are scarfs, balaclavas, neck guards and bandanas. More information on how to make a face mask can be found on the CDC's website: www.cdc.gov.

We need everyone's cooperation to maximize the effectiveness of our COVID-19 related safety measures. At work, maintain social distancing wherever possible, including paying attention to the separation of shifts and work crews and limiting your presence at the workplace to strictly as scheduled and directed by your supervisor or manager. Whether at work or off duty, remember to practice good personal hygiene/good handwashing, cough/sneeze into your elbow and continue to practice social distancing. Finally, if you are ill, do not come to work. Notify your supervisor of your situation while away from the workplace.

If we do these simple acts, we can persevere through these times together. Thank you for everything you do.

References:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Enhanced Cleaning Guidance