

Construction Industry Continues to Encourage and Suggest COVID Protections

Posted on January 24, 2022 by Luly Hernandez

As the world enters another year of a COVID pandemic reality, partly due to the contagious Omicron variant, the glazing industry continues to work towards creating a safer workplace—with immune health and physical wellbeing in mind.

Giroux Glass, based in Los Angeles, has named and authorized a COVID Task Force, which has been in place since the start of the pandemic, according to Barbara Kotsos, director of marketing. The team communicates the company’s COVID protocols, which were defined by this force and comply with California Division of Occupational Safety and Health guidelines.

“This team tracks and collects COVID documentation and test results, along with any changes in protocols,” she says.

“In addition to the usual safety precautions of mandatory N95 or K95 masks while around others, frequent hand washing and social distancing, we have implemented a system which uses Smartsheet to keep track of vaccination and booster status among our employees. Representatives from our Human Resources Dept. attend weekly mini webinars presented by AALRR to keep us up to speed with changes in COVID incidence and recommended procedures, [some of these are listed here](#). Whenever possible, and especially recently since Omicron has been our latest health threat, we have re-enlisted a ‘work from home whenever possible’ mandate for our employees,” she says.

Additionally, Magid released a guide as part of its “Safety Matters” series of instructional safety materials; and Dr. Doug Trout, a medical officer at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Office of Construction Safety and Health, spoke on the importance of encouraging masks, improving workplace ventilation and allowing time off for isolating or quarantining during a recent installment of The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) and NIOSH COVID-19 series.

“For example, one of the tools listed for work areas which may not have full functioning HVAC systems, are to use portable air cleaners ... These types of systems do not bring in outdoor pollution air, but they can be effective at cleaning air within spaces to reduce the concentration of airborne particulates,” Trout explains.

According to a list of ventilation tips from the CPWR, “construction work generates traditional airborne hazards—including solvent vapors, silica dust, welding fumes, diesel fumes and carbon monoxide—that need to be controlled by local exhaust ventilation or increased fresh air supply. Such hazards and controls should be considered when planning for ventilation to control potential coronavirus exposure.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is updating and reviewing on a weekly basis the different masks approved to help protect against COVID-19, including the effective KN95 and the N95s.

“Companies in every industry are working hard to keep employees safe from COVID, focusing on their health and wellbeing, while trying to keep operations running as effectively as possible,” says Beth Sutherland, Magid marketing communications manager. “In Magid’s newest ‘Safety Matters,’ we look at the effectiveness of different face coverings, as well as mask best practices, such as proper fit and removal.”

According to the company, the ‘Safety Matters’ installment cites a 2020 study by the CDC and NIOSH, which concluded N95 respirators are almost twice as effective as commercial three-ply cloth masks in blocking particulates that could contain the virus.

“In the course of the study, N95 respirators prevented 99% of aerosol particles 7 microns or smaller from breaching the protective barrier,” according to company information.



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