



COVID-19 Recommendations for Trailbuilding

Updated May 18, 2020

Introduction

The Professional Trailbuilders Association (PTBA) recognizes that trails are an important facility for mental and physical health. While jurisdictions and timing will vary, in many cases, the construction of trails and recreational facilities has been deemed an essential service due to supply chain, financing, contract deadlines, public need, public hazard associated with uncompleted work and other factors. In other jurisdictions, trail work has been allowed to resume as part of a larger safe workplace-reopening plan.

As characterized by OSHA, general trailbuilding activities are a low exposure risk activity. As most professional trail crews are small (one to five workers), working outside of normal exposure to the public, trailbuilding is an inherently “socially isolated” industry. Additionally, pre-existing work safety guidelines require that workers with hand tools stay at least 10' apart and operation of power saws, brushcutters and mobile power equipment require greater distancing for safety. PTBA believes that utilizing best practices in maintaining a hygienic and safe work site can minimize the potential of exposure to COVID-19 for crew members and members of the general public.

PTBA values the health and safety of its member companies, and also understands the role that individual and collective actions play in the event of this public health crisis. To protect the health and safety of staff, while working to follow all public health guidelines, PTBA is issuing the following recommendations for all trailbuilders and partners who are continuing to operate. This is an evolving situation, and we will continue to monitor and update these recommendations as new guidelines are issued.

PTBA member companies are spread across the globe and current COVID-19 restrictions and recommended practices vary widely between regions. The recommendations outlined in this document do not reflect an endorsement to continue or resume operations. Depending on your location and local orders, the best method for preventing the spread of COVID-19 may be to cease or limit operations and shelter/isolate in place. Please adhere to the recommended operational procedures in your region.



COVID-19 Recommendations for Trailbuilding

BASIC INFECTION PREVENTION MEASURES

As appropriate, all employers and crew members should implement good hygiene and infection control practices. These include but are not limited to:

- Screen crew members at the beginning of each work day (Association of General Contractors list follows). This screening does not need to be documented unless the crew member answers yes to questions 1 through 6 or no to question 7.
 - i. Do you have a temperature above 100.4 degrees F.
 - ii. Do you have any COVID-19 positive members in your household?
 - iii. Do you have a cough?
 - iv. Do you have shortness of breath?
 - v. Do you have fatigue or muscle aches?
 - vi. Do you have a new loss of taste or smell?
 - vii. Do you agree to report the onset of any of these symptoms during your shift?
- Keep anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms off the work site. Any staff member experiencing symptoms should be encouraged to stay home in isolation or quarantine (as [per CDC recommendations](#)), get tested for the virus (if available), and if positive, follow recommendations.
- Require all crew members to practice strict appropriate stay at home social isolation practices when not at work.
- Encourage proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with the inside/elbow of the arm and away from people, or in a tissue to be immediately discarded, and avoid touching the face. Follow the most updated CDC or WHO guidelines for mask-wearing in your area.
- Utilize frequent and thorough hand washing, especially before and after meals, touching your face or after sneezing, coughing. All worksites should provide soap and water for hand washing. If soap and running water are not immediately available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol should be provided. (Take appropriate precautions with industrial alcohol or stove “denatured” alcohol containing methanol as indicated by its SDS.)
- Wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and safety glasses whenever feasible and as required.
- Do not share equipment, including hand tools, chain saws, mechanized equipment or work site items such as electronic equipment, PPE, coolers, water containers, etc. Any tool that is shared must be disinfected prior to use.
- Practice social distancing by keeping 6’ OR MORE away from others. Under a heavy exertion exhale, the potential effective spread of the virus can be greater than 6 feet.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment and/or offices.
- Minimize trips to supply stores, limit trips to only one person and consider having materials delivered by suppliers. Wear appropriate PPE and carry hand sanitizer.



COVID-19 Recommendations for Trailbuilding

WORK-SITE BEST PRACTICES

Employers, employees, partners and subcontractors must utilize practices that limit potential interactions between workers, clients, and/or the public, including:

- Close any public facing offices. Conduct meetings, planning and discussions over the phone/video whenever feasible. If in-person contact is required, be sure to continue physical distancing of 6 feet or more and make every effort to meet outside.
- Prior to project commencement, supervisors should communicate with every crew member about possible interactions with infected people, steps to take if they start feeling ill and remind them of proper protection and spread prevention. Consider having employees signing a statement attesting that they have read the COVID-19 recommendations and will adhere to them to the highest degree feasible
- Discourage carpooling to/from or within the worksite, ensure distancing, and encourage workers to provide their own transportation where possible. Do not use group crew transport unless absolutely necessary.
- Request additional/increased sanitation (disinfecting) of any portable toilets or provide a sanitation plan following each use.
- Identify specific locations and practices for daily trash collection and disposal such as paper, hand towels, food containers, etc.
- Avoid using pressurized air or water sprays to clean equipment, as this may result in the generation of bioaerosols, or create a safe zone of at least 150' from other workers, habitation, etc. Do not clean during periods of high wind.
- Close all project areas to unauthorized visitors when allowed by the land owner or manager.
- Limit contact with local communities and clients to protect the public and all employees. Avoid busy trails.
- Maintain a self-contained and self-sufficient work site as is feasible. If people outside the work crew are in proximity to trail construction or the employees, mandate that those individuals maintain at least 6 feet of distance.
- If an employee is experiencing a fever, cough or shortness of breath, communicate immediately with the supervisor, have the employee remove themselves from the work area and continue to engage in appropriate physical distancing.

Precautions to implement if camped at the worksite or sharing lodging:

- Each person should buy, store and prepare their own meals, drinks and snacks.
- Sanitize all surfaces regularly.
- Encourage self sufficiency and discourage borrowing personal items.
- Set up tents/trailers/cooking areas at least 20 feet apart from others.
- Maintain at least 6' of physical distance in common areas such as toilets, wash areas, and campfires.
- Create a quarantine plan to be immediately implemented upon need.



COVID-19 Recommendations for Trailbuilding

EQUIPMENT BEST PRACTICES

Crew leaders/supervisors should maintain practices that limit the potential for cross-contamination of tools and equipment on the work site. Practices include but are not be limited to:

- Assign tools and equipment to a specific employee for the day. This includes hand tools, machines, tool-specific PPE, electronics (iPads, GPS, radios) etc.
- At the end of each day, each employee should be responsible for properly cleaning and returning their tool(s) and equipment to the storage area. Provide equipment and a designated time period on the clock for cleaning.
- Wipe down trucks, tools and equipment with disinfectant wipes, daily or more often, especially prior to and after a new worker utilizes the equipment. Give special attention to door handles, control knobs, steering wheels, gear shifters, keys and any other commonly touched surfaces. Use aerosol sanitizers in enclosed cabs.
- Sanitize reusable PPE as per manufacturer's recommendation prior to each use, and ensure non-reusable PPE is disposed of properly.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>