Wilderness Stewardship Organizations

Covid Management Responses

**Managing Transportation**

Fleets are on the front lines dealing with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) General Duty Clause requires employers to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm, under which COVID-19 would fall. For many employees, the company vehicle is their workplace.

Wilderness stewardship organizations handle transportation needs through company vehicles, use of personal staff vehicles, and volunteer vehicles. Some organizations utilize buses, vans, and public transportation. As fleet manager, your mission is to lower potential infections among those using your vehicle assets and to minimize the risk of spreading the virus to others with whom drivers interact. The virus is primarily spread via person-to-person contact; however, it is also possible to be infected by touching a surface, such as a company vehicle, that has living COVID-19 virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Where a vehicle has shared drivers, it is important to wipe down with a sanitizer and/or disinfectant frequently touched vehicle surfaces, such as the steering wheel, gear shifter, radio, armrest, power window buttons, and door handles.

In addition, drivers should sanitize equipment, such as handheld computers, scanners, toolboxes, and cart handles used to haul equipment. However, beware that alcohol- or ammonia-based cleaners may damage the interior dashboard and seats. Ammonia-based cleaners may damage in-cab touch screen terminal displays. On the website for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is a link with a list of approved cleaners and disinfectants.

* **Cleaners** are used to remove germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers the risk of infection.
* **Disinfectants** are used to kill germs on surfaces. It does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces, but if used after cleaning, it further lowers the risk of infection.

**Personal Hygiene:**Drivers should sanitize their hands after the completion of each trip. Encourage respiratory etiquette by covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve to avoid expelling viral secretions on vehicle surfaces. Encourage drivers to sanitize all commonly used surfaces multiple times a day. Consider creating a vehicle record for when cleanings occur to reassure that there is a proactive effort to keep things clean.

**Transporting Crews:** “Social distancing” is the key to slowing the spread of the virus by breaking the chain of transmission. This can mean that the number of vehicles used increases in order to maintain social separation. If there are two passengers in a vehicle, you can ask the passenger to sit in the back seat to practice a degree of social distancing. Each organization should assess the relative risks of transmission and determine how best to manage when multiple people or work crews drive together to a job site. Some companies are temporarily limiting the number passengers in single vehicle, allowing greater use of personal vehicles, short term rental of additional vehicles, or eliminating some trips.

**Sanitizing Pool Vehicles:** Instruct drivers to wipe down every touched surface in a vehicle – first when entering the vehicle and second, when they return it. The coronavirus can survive for 72 hours on a surface before dying if the surface is not cleaned.

**Tools and Equipment:** Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desk, office, or other work tools and equipment when possible. It may be best to assign out tools and equipment to for their own individual use during this time. Require individuals to clean and disinfect their own tools and equipment daily. Mandate cleaning tools if different techs are using the same tools within a 72-hour period. Also, clean and disinfect tool belts and other gear prior to reuse using a cleaner or disinfectant following application instructions on the product label.

**Disposable Gloves:** Consider stocking up and making available latex and non-latex gloves. Have both on hand because some drivers may be allergic to latex.

**Refueling:** Instruct drivers to wipe down the fuel pump handle and keypad prior to inputting credit cards. If you don’t have wipes, then consider using a paper towel to grab the fuel dispenser handle. Ask drivers to wipe down fuel cards, especially if it is a shared card. Consider assigning a fuel card to each driver to avoid sharing. If drivers wear gloves when refueling, be sure to instruct them to dispose of them before re-entering the cab.

**Cabin Filters:** Consider accelerating the frequency of replacing cabin filters beyond OEM schedules and recommendations.

**HIPAA Restrictions:** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (known as HIPAA) makes it a criminal act to divulge medical information without the employee’s permission. If you are informed that an employee has tested positive, inform HR and clean the vehicle. Violating HIPAA regulations could legally comprise yourself and your company.

**Customer Interaction Guidelines:** Some companies do not require a customer to sign for services or invoices. Instead the driver signs on their behalf to avoid the sharing of pens and devices. It is recommended to avoid letting customers use a company phone and to discourage handshaking. Also, establish procedures on how a driver interacts with another party if involved in a street accident.

**Personal Use:** Consider whether to modify personal use policies to gain tighter control as who is riding in the vehicle. When companies allow spouses and children to use company vehicles, it loses control over who is a passenger in a corporate vehicle.

**Mobile Fleet Service Providers:** Some fleets are minimizing driver interaction at service centers by transitioning to mobile fleet service providers to minimize the need to take a vehicle to a shop.

**Resources:** As fleet manager, you need to stay abreast of guidance from governmental health agencies and consider how to incorporate these recommendations into your fleet.

* The CDC provides the latest information about COVID-19 at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)
* OSHA offers information specific to workers and employees – [www.osha.gov/covid-19](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/)