

ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JULY 2020

Director's Comments:



Planning & Leading In Uncertain Times

Running a Professional Trade Association, and scheduling the many meetings and events doesn't always come easily, even under normal circumstances. However, with COVID-19, this year has felt like a constant game of "Whack-A-Mole." Our world now seems to be stuck in a continuous cycle of change and uncertainty.

Often confusing, or conflicting guidance from Politicians, the Mainstream Media, and even the Medical Community, leave more questions than answers about when the Coronavirus will let us safely return to workplaces, schools or other regular activities. The "New Normal" as it's now sometimes called seems anything but normal to me.

I remain optimistic that we will be able to return to having our industry lunch meetings soon. We also have our Fall General Meeting and Sporting Clay Shoot scheduled for October. But at this point, who knows what sort of restrictions or limitations we will be under. Hopefully everyone is staying safe and healthy and doing their part to help flatten the curve.

One bright spot is that several AUCA member companies throughout the state are actively looking to hire employees in various positions. If you know someone that has been impacted by the economic toll the Pandemic has taken on many other industries, now might be a time for them to look for a career change to an industry that, even during the bleakest of times, still remains essential.

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Tim

Proceeding With Caution

UPDATED STATEWIDE COVID-19 HEALTH ORDER FOR ALABAMA

AMENDED SAFER AT HOME

The Safer at Home order extends until August 31st at 5 p.m.



NEW UPDATES:

MASKS

Masks required in schools and colleges, where possible, for employees and students in second grade and above

WHAT'S STAYING THE SAME:

MASKS

Masks required in public when interacting within 6 feet with people of another household, subject to certain exceptions

ENTERTAINMENT VENUES (SUCH AS ARCADES, THEATERS, BOWLING ALLEYS)

May open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Allowed subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

May open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

CHILD DAY CARE FACILITIES

May open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

SUMMER CAMP

May open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

INDIVIDUALS

Encouraged to stay home and follow good sanitation practices

EMPLOYERS

Businesses may open subject to sanitation and social-distancing guidelines

RETAIL STORES

All retail stores may open subject to 50% occupancy rate, social-distancing and sanitation rules

MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Allowed unless prohibited in the future by the State Health Officer to preserve resources necessary to diagnose and treat COVID-19; providers must follow COVID-19-related rules and guidance from state regulatory boards or public health authorities

SENIOR CITIZEN CENTERS

Regular programming still suspended except meals still available through curbside pick-up or delivery

HOSPITALS AND NURSING HOMES

Still must implement policies to restrict visitation

NON-WORK GATHERINGS

Still required to maintain 6 feet of distance between persons not from same household

RESTAURANTS, BARS AND BREWERIES

May open with limited table seating, 6 feet between tables and subject to additional sanitation rules and guidelines

ATHLETIC FACILITIES (SUCH AS FITNESS CENTERS AND COMMERCIAL GYMS)

Athletic facilities may open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

CLOSE-CONTACT SERVICE PROVIDERS

Close-contact service providers (such as barber shops, hair salons, nail salons, tattoo services) may open subject to social-distancing and sanitation rules and guidelines

BEACHES

Open with no limit on gatherings. Must maintain 6 feet of separation.

“Safer at Home” Mask Requirement Frequently Asked Questions

1. When do I have to wear a mask?

You have to wear a mask when you are in public and in close contact with other people. Specifically, the order says to wear a mask when you are within six feet of a person from another household in any of the following places: (a) an indoor space open to the public; (b) a vehicle operated by a transportation service; and (c) an outdoor public space where ten or more people are gathered.

2. Do young children have to wear a mask? What about people who are exercising? In other words, are there any exceptions to the mask-wearing requirement?

There are five categories of exceptions. The largest category, exceptions for “practical necessity,” covers people or situations where mask use is incompatible with the realities of life—for example, children six or younger, people with certain medical conditions or disabilities, eating and drinking, medical and dental procedures, and so on. There are also categories of exceptions for exercise, for communicating with an audience, and for certain essential job functions. An additional category carves out narrow exceptions for protected activities like voting and religious worship—but even then, wearing a mask is strongly encouraged.

3. What kind of face mask is required?

The requirement allows all kinds of masks to be used—whether store-bought, homemade, or improvised from household items like scarves, bandanas, or t-shirts. The key is for the mask to cover your nostrils and mouth. For instructions on how to make your own mask, see the CDC’s “How to Make Cloth Face Coverings,” available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>. The use of a face shield complies with the new mask requirement so long as it fully covers the nostrils and mouth. The shield must extend just past the chin in order to fully cover the mouth.

4. I live in a city or county that already has a local mask order. Am I supposed to follow my local order or this new statewide order?

Follow this new statewide order. While this order is in effect, it will replace all local mask rules to provide a uniform, statewide rule.

5. I am a business owner. What does this order mean for my business?

The order requires businesses to take reasonable steps, where practicable, to encourage mask use by employees and customers. One example of a reasonable step might be to post signs encouraging customers and patrons to wear a mask. Although a business is not required to deny entry to people who are mask-less, they always retain the right to do so—and doing so would certainly be a reasonable step to encourage mask use.

6. How long will the new mask requirement be in effect?

The new mask requirement goes into effect Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. It is currently set to expire on July 31, 2020.

7. Does this requirement apply to schools?

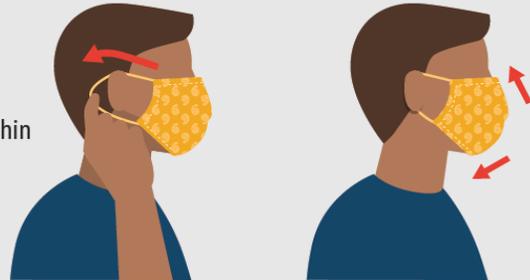
The new mask or facial covering requirement, which expires on July 31, applies in the school setting. The requirement, however, is limited to people interacting with others within six feet of “an indoor space open to the general public, a vehicle operated by a transportation service, or an outdoor public space where 10 or more people are gathered.” Although some areas of school property may be open to the public, others may not. Additionally, the mask and/or facial-covering requirement contains various exceptions, including ones for people who are six years of age or younger and for people with a medical condition or disability that prevents him or her from wearing a facial covering.

How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering

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

WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING CORRECTLY

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily
- Do not place a mask on a child younger than 2



USE THE FACE COVERING TO HELP PROTECT OTHERS

- Wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands

FOLLOW EVERYDAY HEALTH HABITS

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



TAKE OFF YOUR CLOTH FACE COVERING CAREFULLY, WHEN YOU'RE HOME

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, both of which should be saved for health care workers and other medical first responders.

For instructions on making a cloth face covering, see:

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

News & Notes:

State Representative Ron Johnson Dies:

Alabama State Representative Ron Johnson died on July 14th from complications of liver cancer at the age of 76. Representative Johnson resided in Sylacauga and represented Alabama District 33 which includes portions of Clay, Coosa and Talladega Counties. At the time of his death, Johnson was the longest-serving continuous member of the House of Representatives having served in the Alabama Legislature for 42 years. State law requires the Governor to call a special election to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

Work Zone Accident Claims Life of AUCA Member Company Employee:

Terry Smith, a long time employee in traffic control with C & H Construction Services was tragically killed in a Work Zone Accident on I-65 in Mobile on June 25th. Please keep his family, friends, employer and colleagues in your thoughts and prayers, and always remember to drive safely through work zones so that all workers can return home to their families.

AUCA Newest Member Company:
Bama Concrete Products Company, Inc.
Tuscaloosa, AL - Corporate Office
www.bamaconcrete.com

2020 Primary Runoff Election Results:

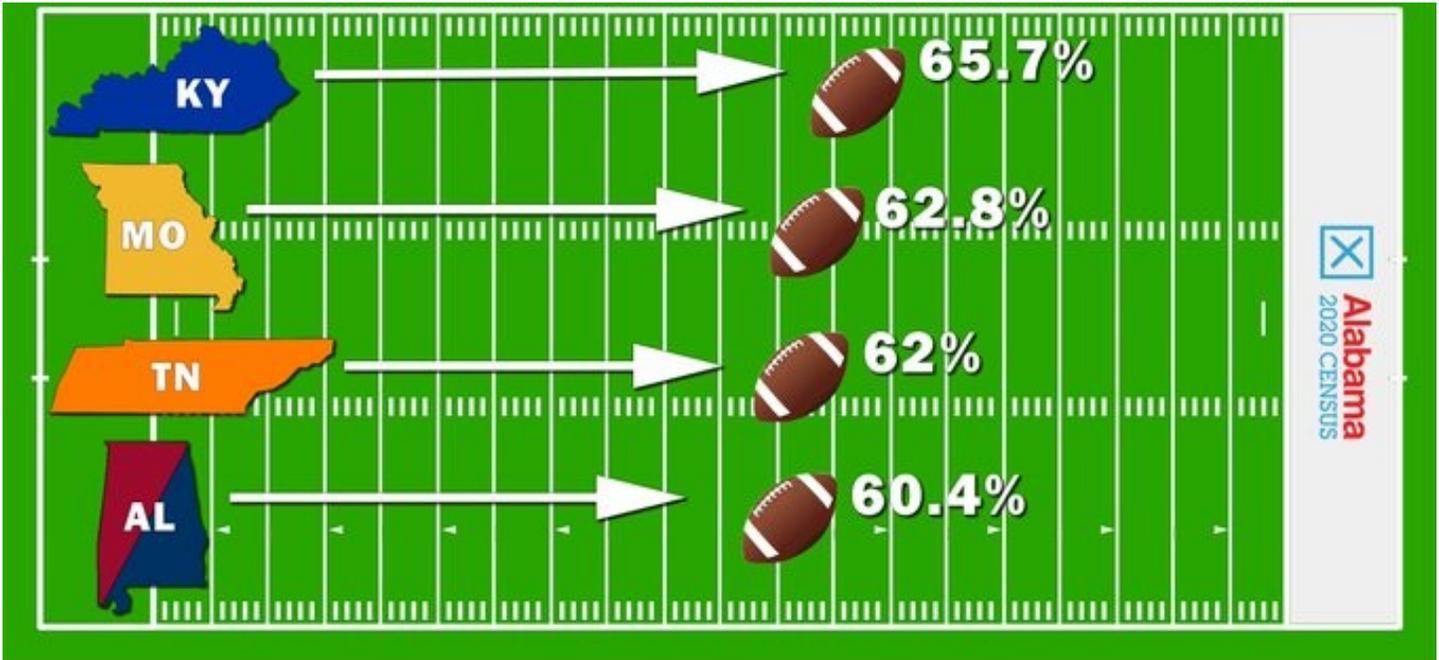
Tommy Tuberville defeated Jeff Sessions by a commanding margin to win the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate seat. He will now challenge Democrat incumbent Doug Jones in the November 3rd General Election.

Jerry Carl emerged as the Republican nominee for the 1st Congressional District seat and will face Democrat James Averhart in November. Barry Moore was the surprising winner in the 2nd Congressional District Republican runoff and will face Democrat Phyllis Harvey-Hall in the General Election.



News & Notes:

2020 U.S. Census - Alabama Counts!



ALABAMA IS CURRENTLY FOURTH IN THE SEC IN 2020 CENSUS PARTICIPATION. LET'S STEP IT UP!

AUCA 2021 Board of Directors Nominations:

AUCA will be soliciting the membership for suggestions of people to serve on the 2021 AUCA Board of Directors. If you have someone in mind that you think would be an asset on the AUCA Board, please email us by August 31st to recommend them to the AUCA Nominating Committee. If you are interested in serving yourself, please feel free to list your name as well.

Nomination Forms will be sent out electronically to all member companies. The Nominating Committee will review the nomination forms of those desiring to serve on the 2021 Board at the September 9th AUCA Board Meeting. The proposed slate of nominees will be announced to the membership and the candidates will be voted on by the members in attendance at the October 15th General Meeting in Montgomery.



News & Notes:

Safe + Sound Week - August 10-16, 2020:

Safe + Sound Week is a nationwide event held each August that recognizes the successes of workplace health and safety programs and offers information and ideas on how to keep America's workers safe.

Why Participate?

Successful safety and health programs can proactively identify and manage workplace hazards before they cause injury or illness, improving sustainability and the bottom line. Participating in Safe + Sound Week can help get your program started, energize an existing one, or provide a chance to recognize your safety successes.

Who Participates?

All organizations looking for an opportunity to recognize their commitment to safety are welcome to participate. Last year, more than 3,300 businesses helped to raise awareness about workers' health and safety!



<https://www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek/>

Governor Ivey Awards ADECA Grants for Projects in Alabama:

Governor Ivey has announced \$2.9 Million in grants to continue providing more Alabamians with access to high-speed internet services. The Governor awarded the grants to providers to extend broadband services in seven Alabama communities. With the latest funding, approximately \$18.5 Million has been awarded this year to expand high-speed internet access in mainly unserved rural areas.

Additionally, the Governor announced \$1.1 Million in grants to fund several needed Sewer and Wastewater Treatment projects throughout the state. These projects will be located in Sumiton, Reform, Town Creek, Camp Hill, Samson, Carbon Hill, and Oneonta.



Upcoming Events:



PRESENTED BY **CompTRUSTAGC**  Managing Your Risk

Construction Risk Conference

August 27, 2020

Offered in a Live In-Person format with limited seating according to CDC and state guidelines, and a virtual option for attendees to participate thru a livestream, web conferencing option.

AUCA Local Industry Lunch Meetings

Dates and Locations To Be Announced Due to COVID-19

AUCA Board of Directors Meeting

September 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.



A CGA REGIONAL PARTNER EVENT

September 22 - 24, 2020
The Grand Hotel, Point Clear



***AUCA 2020 Fall General Meeting
& Sporting Clay Shoot***

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club - Montgomery, AL



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

From Bob Briant, Jr. - Chairman CWCC & Sante Esposito - Key Advocates

July 1, 2020

HOUSE PROPOSES ACTION ON INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING, INCLUDING WATER

Based on reports from our DC-based lobbyist Sante Esposito, we are providing you this update to ensure you have up to the minute information on Coalition priorities. Recently, Democrats in the House of Representatives unveiled a \$1.5 Trillion infrastructure plan known as the "Moving Forward Act" (HR2). HR 2 calls for a huge increase in funding to repair roads and bridges while expanding broadband access in rural areas. It also has major wins for the Coalition on water infrastructure funding including:

- Clean Water SRF -\$40B (\$8B annually for 5 years)
- Safe Drinking Water SRF - \$4.140B for FY22; \$4.8B for FY23; and \$5.5B for FY 24 and 25
- Alternative Water Source Program - \$600M
- Title 16 WIIN Grants - \$500M

These funding levels meet or exceed the goals set by the Coalition. Our collective advocacy and that of our partners is finally breaking through.

As reported previously, the surface transportation bill advanced by the House Transportation Committee last week is the centerpiece, but this is much more than a transportation bill. It addresses tax changes, energy and water infrastructure investments, housing, schools and more. The bill proposes addressing the insolvency of the Highway Trust Fund with a massive transfer from the general fund, \$145.3 billion, which is more than the sum of every other transfer to the Highway Trust Fund since 2008 combined. A House Ways and Means Committee said that the bill is the "opening salvo" of a conversation about how to pay for infrastructure, a debate that will dominate surface transportation negotiations going forward. It also includes a safety section that originated in the Energy and Commerce Committee that includes provisions aimed at preventing deaths from hot cars, keyless ignition, drunk and distracted driving and more. It's a collection of safety advocates' biggest priorities from the past few years, some of which have been on E&C's radar for a while but have yet to be enacted. Consumer Reports called it "transformative and necessary." It would mandate crash-avoidance technologies in all new passenger vehicles. Another would require vehicle headlights that reduce glare and automatically adapt to oncoming traffic or curves in the road. And a third would require new cars to include technology to detect the presence of a person in the backseat when a driver is exiting and provide a warning.



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

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Concurrently, the Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee passed the surface transportation component of that legislation. Known as the INVEST in America Act, the measure was passed by a party-line vote and would authorize \$494 billion over five years, including \$309 billion for highways (42% increase over current levels) and \$105 billion for public transit (72% increase).

Floor votes are expected by the end of this week after a series of surgical amendments are considered / approved. Then the measure moves to the Senate, which we hope will take up these measures at the funding levels produced by the House. HR2 is loaded up with Democratic priorities, so we know that it will not be a rubber stamp in the Senate if and when it proceeds.

While we are very excited about the advancement of the surface bill and announcement of the broader infrastructure investment, its ultimate success is in the hands of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and ultimately, President Trump. If the upper house passes their own legislation, the two measures will be put into conference committee and a deal will need to be reached. Alternatively, the Senate could stall until after the election, perhaps passing a clean extension in the interim. Finally, but least likely, major infrastructure investment could be included in the next round of stimulus relief, which is expected to pass before the August recess.

No matter how it plays out, we are very encouraged to see tangible progress being put forth by Congress. Infrastructure has been a hot button issue since the start of the Trump Administration, yet our industry has not seen the promised uptick in infrastructure spending. As the economy begins to heal from wounds of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain hopeful that Congress will look to infrastructure construction as an essential part of our national recovery and pass a reauthorization of the surface bill.

WRDA Bills in Senate and House

The current WRDA law expires Sept. 30 of this year. We have learned that the goal is to reauthorize the program this year to keep it on a two-year cycle. The focus is on the Corps of Engineers – projects and process – although in the past WRDA has been the vehicle for inclusion of other “water” issues of interest. If HR2 (cited above) doesn’t move past the Senate, the WRDA process allows us an avenue to continue to push CWCC priorities.

As previously reported, on May 6, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee reported two water bills – S. 3591, the “America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020” (AWIA) and S. 3590, the “Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020.” The two bills are intended to form the Senate 2020



Clean Water Construction Coalition Report

(Continued from page 10)

WRDA bill. There are two bills because of the split jurisdiction in the House - AWIA is a Corps of Engineers/clean water bill which is under the jurisdiction of the House T&I Committee; the Drinking Water bill falls under the jurisdiction of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Highlights and thoughts on both bills from Key Advocates -

- \$25M for FY 2022-2024 for the Alternative Water Source Grants Program - the DeFazio bill authorizes \$75M for each of 5 fiscal years;
- \$2B in FY 2022, \$2.5B in FY 2023 and \$3B in FY 2024 for the Clean Water SRF (subject to score-keeping and offsets if necessary) - the DeFazio bill authorizes \$14B over 5 fiscal years;
- Reauthorization and expansion of the Drinking Water Infrastructure Risk and Resiliency Program (\$10M for FY 2022-2024 of the Drinking Water bill), and the creation of a companion \$15M for FY2022-2024 program for clean water systems;
- \$250M for FY 2021-2022 for reauthorization of the Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Grant Program - the DeFazio bill authorizes \$225M for each of five fiscal years;
- \$50M for WIFIA for FY 2022-2024;
- No authorizations for the Safe Drinking Water SRF as that was re-authorized and increased last Congress;
- No funds for the Title XVI WIIN grant program as that falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee;



cleanwaterconstructioncoalition.org

Fleet Safety:

Provided by J. Smith Lanier & Co., a Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC company

COVID-19 Impact on Driving Risks

Lytix, a fleet video telematics provider, has recently shared insights on changes in driving risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. These insights come from an analysis of client data captured by their recording devices since "shelter in place" guidelines went into effect. A couple of findings that should be of value to all drivers:

- 64% increase in animal strikes as compared to this same time last year. Lytx and other sources believe that animals have ventured out of their normal spots and into more developed areas due to the decrease in traffic during the COVID shutdown. We should be extra vigilant during the peak hours between 3 and 7am in the morning, and anticipate that we might encounter animals in areas where we wouldn't normally see them. The data revealed that 73% of the animal strikes occurred at 55 mph or higher, so we really need to watch our speed during these peak times when visibility is not good. While you may not be able to avoid an animal strike, you should avoid overreactions such as sudden swerves and hard braking that might cause you to lose control of your vehicle and make a bad situation worse.
- 19% increase in speed and 10% decrease in travel time for a six week period ending May 1st. Commercial truck drivers have been going above and beyond to keep our store shelves stocked and our economy moving during the pandemic. While the data indicates that our "truckers" have been doing this a little more quickly than normal, Lytx also found a 55% decrease in severity of risky driving behaviors by drivers in the fleets that they monitor. The data seems to indicate that the truck drivers have not missed the rest of us. As we start to move back to "normal", and more non-commercial vehicles return to the roadways, let's all be aware of the need to be patient and defensive drivers. The truck drivers will be slowing down, and the rest of us need to recognize the essential service they provide and give them some room.

Summer Construction and Increased Traffic

As more of us return to work, the typical summer road construction will also be there to greet us. Highway work zones add additional driving hazards due to the distraction of workers and equipment near the roadway and the maddening stop and go traffic jams created by lane closures. So what should we do to avoid being part of the problem in construction zones?

- Look for feasible alternate routes. Avoid the stress even if it adds a few minutes to your trip.
- Anticipate delays; allow yourself extra time, and just "roll with it".
- Merge early when you see the lane closure signs, and don't be the aggressive driver that runs hard in a diminishing lane to improve your position in the stop and go parade by only a few spots.
- Follow the speed limits in work zones. They are lower for a reason as work zones are dangerous. You want to reach your destination, and the workers need to go home safely to their families.



COVID-19 Guidance for the Construction Workforce

OSHA is committed to protecting the health and safety of America's workers and workplaces during these unprecedented times. The agency will be issuing a series of industry-specific alerts designed to keep workers safe.

When working in the construction industry, the following tips can help reduce the risk of exposure to the coronavirus:

- Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
- Allow workers to wear masks over their nose and mouth to prevent them from spreading the virus.
- Continue to use other normal control measures, including personal protective equipment (PPE), necessary to protect workers from other job hazards associated with construction activities.
- Advise workers to avoid physical contact with others and direct employees/contractors/visitors to increase personal space to at least six feet, where possible. Where work trailers are used, all workers should maintain social distancing while inside the trailers.
- Train workers how to properly put on, use/wear, and take off protective clothing and equipment.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Promote personal hygiene. If workers do not have immediate access to soap and water for handwashing, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency-approved cleaning chemicals from [List N](#) or that have label claims against the coronavirus.
- To the extent tools or equipment must be shared, provide and instruct workers to use alcohol-based wipes to clean tools before and after use. When cleaning tools and equipment, workers should consult manufacturer recommendations for proper cleaning techniques and restrictions.
- Keep in-person meetings (including toolbox talks and safety meetings) as short as possible, limit the number of workers in attendance, and use social distancing practices.
- Clean and disinfect portable jobsite toilets regularly. Hand sanitizer dispensers should be filled regularly. Frequently-touched items (i.e., door pulls and toilet seats) should be disinfected.
- Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.

For more information, visit www.osha.gov/coronavirus or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

*OSHA issues alerts to draw attention to
worker safety and health issues and solutions.*

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**AUCA IS A MEMBER-DRIVEN, NEEDS
FOCUSED TRADE ASSOCIATION CREATED
SOLELY TO PROMOTE AND ADVANCE THE
UTILITY INDUSTRY IN THE STATE OF
ALABAMA.**

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