

Carrie Edomm

From: Jennifer Fagan <jfagan@texcon.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2020 6:12 PM
To: execdir@sam-dfw.org
Subject: COVID-19 Safety Measures

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Dear TCA Member,

As local jurisdictions issue "stay home" orders across Texas to stop the spread of COVID-19, some Texans are wondering why construction projects are continuing as other businesses have shut down.

The reason is simple: if Texas hospitals experience a patient surge that overwhelms our emergency rooms, health care leaders, as well as local mayors and judges, will turn to construction contractors to quickly build additional ER capacity in communities that need it. If the Army Corps of Engineers mobilizes to build additional hospital surge capacity, they will contract with construction contractors because we have the expertise and skilled workforce to get the job done quickly and professionally. But that won't be the case if our companies are shut down as part of the "stay home" orders, and workers are laid off, and some take jobs in other essential industries.

We are working diligently to keep construction companies on the job, because it is critical to preserving emergency construction capacity. This is true not only in the event of a hospital surge, but if a natural disaster occurs in the midst of the coronavirus crisis. A viral pandemic does not halt hurricanes or tornadoes or floods. The trained specialists in construction respond to these natural disasters by repairing and building new homes, hospitals, and schools, repairing our emergency operations centers and petrochemical plants, and getting electrical, plumbing, and air conditioning working again in devastated communities.

OSHA, with input from the CDC, has developed guidance for contractors to use during this health crisis including specific steps they can take to reduce workers' risk of exposure. Enforcing those guidelines on job sites is critical. Our message to local leaders is, rather than shutting down the entire construction industry, and in the process much of a county's hospital construction surge capacity, they should feel empowered to shut down flagrant violators of safety protocols established by OSHA including physical distancing and

sanitary policies needed to stop the spread of the virus. Most contractors are not only enforcing safe practices among workers, but have erected barriers between construction workers and the public.

Construction can be considered an army at the ready, but only if our workers remain on the job. Recognizing this, local officials in most jurisdictions that have issued "stay home" orders have designated construction a part of the essential critical infrastructure workforce. We submit this is good for Texas because it means we are better prepared as a state to respond to a health care disaster, or any other calamity that befalls us in the coming weeks and months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raymond Risk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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