

Guidance for Solar Installers, EPCs and O&M Service Providers on Managing Through the COVID-19 Pandemic

Background & Helpful Links

The rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic impacts private businesses in a variety of ways. Solar installers in particular will face unique challenges. Below you will find guidance and links to additional resources, some of which are written specifically for the solar industry, while others are more general. For additional information and updates about this crisis, visit www.seia.org/covid-19.

General Information and Guidance on the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published "[Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)" to help companies respond in the event of coronavirus in the workplace. The guidance was developed in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). The document provides practical guidance for preventing the spread of COVID-19, also known as novel coronavirus, and contains information on safe work practices and appropriate personal protective equipment based on the risk level of exposure.
- OSHA has launched a [COVID-19 webpage](#).
- For further information about Coronavirus, please visit the HHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage on [COVID-19](#).
- Follow the [CDC](#) and the [WHO](#) protocol for social distancing and virus prevention.

Guidance for Business Conduct

Unless guidance or specific orders are issued from federal and state government leadership which specifically restrict such actions, **IF** your company is allowed under the respective directives to continue work on installations, construction, and operations & maintenance, we recommend that you take these additional precautions:

Contact all customers with upcoming appointments for solar installations, EPC or O&M work in the next eight to ten weeks.

- Offer to reschedule with as much notice as possible.
- If you have a high volume in your queue, ask for 48 to 72 hours minimum (or longer) in order to reschedule; however, you should be flexible and understanding.
- Assure your customers that you are happy and willing to find a suitable time to conduct the installation.
- Consider what accommodations you can make for rescheduling, particularly considering crew and parts availability.

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Let your customers know that if they have anyone at home who may be or is experiencing symptoms of illness (particularly cough, fever and/or shortness of breath), they are able to reschedule their installation. Note that they may not give you details of the illness or confirm if it is COVID-19 or other illness and you should not ask for specific details. Similarly, if they have anyone on-site who may be in the at-risk categories, such as >65 years old, immune-compromised or immune-suppressed, they may request a rescheduling of their service.

- Assure your customers that you will keep any information is confidential and that details are not necessary.
- Offer to work with your customers to reschedule the installation to a later date.
- Provide your customers with multiple ways to contact you, such as a telephone number, email or other means.

Similarly, if your crew or employees are experiencing symptoms of illness (such as coughing, fever, headaches or shortness of breath), ask them to stay home and / or if necessary, re-arrange crews and proactively reschedule installation appointments to accommodate your staffing situation.

- Employees who are experiencing symptoms of illness such as fever, headaches, cough and shortness of breath should not conduct any rooftop work; even if the symptoms are mild, they should discuss this with the crew lead and stay home.
- Health and safety are of the utmost priority with any field work; to protect your crew, if anyone is experiencing symptoms of illness, you should substitute that role with another healthy crew member and schedule your jobs accordingly.

Note that municipalities and other government services may also decide to close services or conduct all business (such as plan design reviews, permitting or other services) virtually, your teams will need to take this into consideration as you develop your in-house workflow and scheduling.

- These delays or rescheduling to virtual services are also beyond their control and as advised by their city, county, state or federal leadership; so please stay calm and work proactively and empathetically to find mutually beneficial solutions.
- Regularly check websites and availability of those jurisdictions for which you have pending permitting applications and inspections. Considerable rescheduling may be necessary and will affect your work queues.

Assure your customers that you value their business, your crew will greet them as advised (no personal contact such as shaking hands) and will keep the recommended minimum social distancing of six feet.

- Be sure to let your crews know to carry and show their company identification and any essential company information.
- Keep in contact with your customer's on-site contact and let them know ahead of time with a phone call that the crew is on the way and the name of the main contact person such as the crew lead.
- Only have the crew lead or other main representative speak directly with the customer.

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- Be respectful that your customers may have children or older, at-risk individuals living with them during your installation visit and the crews should keep to the recommended social distancing if they need to enter the home to perform work.
- Kindly remind your customers that they should keep all pets and children or other at-home individuals in other areas of the home where work is not being actively conducted so that the installation can go efficiently.
- Social distancing means deliberately increasing the physical space by at least six feet between people to avoid spreading illness. Practice social distancing with your crew and your customers.

Assure your customer that as you are able, you will keep them informed as the current situation evolves.

- Like you and your crew, your customers are also operating in a time of concern and uncertainty, be committed to inform them of any changes or additional precautions that may be put in place.

For your employees and crews and for everyone's well-being, these specific precautions should be taken to comply with state, federal, CDC and WHO guidelines:

- If asked or prior to being on site, be prepared to inform customers of what normal practices your crew conducts for the following:
 - Warehouse cleaning especially for frequently accessed areas with bare hands, such as door handles, light switches, desks, bathrooms, stock areas, etc.
 - Vehicle cleaning, especially for door handles (both inside and out), steering wheels, gear lever, radio, vents, mirrors, windows, seats, armrests, storage consoles, glovebox, toolboxes, dashboard and other hard surfaces.
 - Note that using disinfecting spray or wipes requires that the surface be kept wet for at least four minutes and then air-dried, or as indicated by the product manufacturer.
- Re-assure customers and employees that your crew are keeping the six-foot social distancing protocols recommended including in vehicles, lifts and other equipment as can be practically and safely accommodated.
- Let them know of your in-house hand-washing or other sanitary procedures that you are undertaking prior to crews commencing work shifts.
- Let them know what supplies you are providing the crew with to safeguard them, such as mobile handwashing capability and / or other sanitizing methods, disinfecting wipes or cleansers for work areas, safety or dusk masks necessary for their work, prior to leaving the warehouse, in the field, and during breaks.

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In addition to the above, for the safety and well-being of your crew employees, consider the following:

- Limit crew talks or meetings to no more than 10 people, with the proper social distancing or use remote tools or on-line meetings if possible.
- Remind crews to use your warehouse bathroom facilities prior to leaving for on-site work.
- Identify publicly available restrooms in your work locale that can be accessed or used during work breaks or as needed and communicate this with your crews.
- Ensure your crews have the proper PPE, cleaning supplies, handwashing or sanitizing equipment on-board their work vehicles.
- Avoid touching doorbells, doorknobs, door handles, and other similar entry/exit surface at work sites unless you have the proper PPE, such as gloves; if you must depress a button or open a doorknob or handle, use your knuckle, elbow or forearms.
- Suggest that the crew all takes a break at the same time.
- Ensure your crew each always has the proper company identification available.
- If your company has issued an “Essential Work Compliance” letter, which identifies your crew as in compliance with any state or local directive to support critical infrastructure work during shelter-in-place directives, the crew lead must make sure that letter is readily available in all crew vehicles or with work order(s) in case you are asked to provide that letter to local law enforcement or government representatives who may require it.
- Follow all company required health and safety initiatives and instructions as normally required.
- Regularly check in with the crew to assess their health and safety during the workday and consider how to regularly provide feedback on challenges or observations to your company leadership.

Overall, we encourage you to remember that your employees and your customer’s health and safety are the utmost priority. In your best interest and in the interest of your customers and your company, please comply with all state and local directives and instructions from law enforcement, first responders and government representatives. Contact your crew lead, crew chief or company leadership with any questions or for further clarification.

There are many opportunities for your organizations to support your local community if you have the means of assistance. For example, if your organization has extra stock of dust masks or protective masks, gloves or face shields, we ask that you consider donating your extra stock to local hospitals and first responders.

SEIA has additional resources and information that is updated regularly on our [website](#). Check back frequently for more information as we work through this together.

Stay healthy and safe!