

Returning to work on a suspended construction site

Risk Control services from Liberty Mutual Insurance



The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted construction sites across the country, and many have been placed on hold. Contractors returning to work on a suspended construction site may face unique hazards.

Workforce and communication

Address the needs of your workers. Your communication style and content could have a direct impact on the successful completion of the project. During the pre-planning process consider the CDC/NIOSH recommended practices that you will bring forward, as well as addressing worker mental health issues.

Fall protection

Fall protection systems may need to be inspected to ensure they will work effectively.

- Are floor hole covers in good condition and properly labeled?
- Are personal fall arrest anchorage points still acceptable?
- Should suspended scaffolding be re-inspected?

Public safety

Protecting the public from injury during construction is always a primary concern of any project team. During project restart planning and preparation, inspect and remove any loose or damaged objects from the project that could fall/fly and injure the public. Reestablish perimeter protection, traffic control, covered walkways, and lighting.

Temporary structures and infra-structure

Any temporary structures left in place will need to be inspected prior to starting up the project. Scaffolds, stair towers, and personnel hoists associated with the project should be inspected prior to use. Shoring or re-shoring should be inspected per the shoring engineers' recommendations and drawings.

Structural integrity

It is important to inspect the structure to see if any degradation has occurred. Incomplete or unfinished structures should be evaluated prior to restart, such as structural steel, precast, duct runs, and pan decking systems.

Property protection

Protecting the structure under construction remains a priority, and security and fire protection will need to be reviewed.

- Does the project location still require the use of on-site security?
- Will fire prevention systems such as sprinklers, standpipes, and alarm systems need to be inspected prior to project restart?

Mold and occupational disease prevention

Rodents and insects may have infiltrated the site or water may have impacted the structure. Address any damage before startup. Investigate the following:

- Has any insect or rodent damage occurred? How will it be addressed?
- How will HVAC systems be restarted?

Major equipment

The safe restart of major equipment, such as cranes, is essential to a project. Consider the following:

- How will cranes be restarted safely?
- Will rigging need to be inspected prior to use?

Project records

Properly maintaining project records could have a direct impact on your ability to get the schedule back on track. Consider:

- Video documenting the site's condition prior to startup.
- Re-inventorying all material and equipment.

Contingency plan

It is important to consider that the pandemic may require additional work suspension or site shutdown on a long term project. Consider reviewing your business continuity plan in anticipation of future disruptions.



Looking for more comprehensive safety information? As a policyholder, you have exclusive access to risk control tools and resources through Liberty Mutual SafetyNet™ – visit lmi.co/safetynet

For more information, contact your local service director or the Risk Control Consulting Center. Email anytime – RCConsultingCenter@LibertyMutual.com – or call 1-866-757-7324, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern.