



Home Builders Across America Make Job Safety a Top Priority

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) encouraged members, and all residential construction companies, to halt work for at least 10 minutes the week of Jan. 11-15 for a [COVID-19 Jobsite Safety Stand Down](#) to remind workers what they should do to keep themselves safe from coronavirus and to help reduce its spread.

After the success of the first COVID-19 stand down in April, NAHB and its construction industry partners facilitated a second round of pandemic-specific safety training in the wake of the national post-holiday surge in infections.

"NAHB members have done an excellent job of maintaining safe workplaces during the pandemic, but as COVID-19 cases increased after the holidays, we need to be proactive with our safety stand downs to make sure we continue with the proper protocols to keep our workers and communities healthy," said NAHB Chairman Chuck Fowke, a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla.

As part of the safety stand down, members were asked to reiterate coronavirus safety precautions, such as wearing face coverings; maintaining a distance of six feet between workers at all times; cleaning and sanitizing frequently used tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces on a regular basis; ensuring the proper sanitation of common surfaces and equipment; and providing safe, clean and accessible restrooms and adequate hand-washing stations.

Home Builders across the country, in conjunction with their state and local associations, participated in the stand down. The North Carolina Home Builders Association encouraged their members to pause for safety. One of their members, Red Tree Builders in Asheville, shared "It is always our priority to ensure our trade partners and Red Tree team members get to go home to their families at the end of each day safe and healthy."

NAHB and other construction industry partners have developed a comprehensive [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Plan for Construction](#) that outlines the steps every employer and employee should take to reduce the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19. It describes how to prevent worker exposure to coronavirus, protective measures to be taken on the job site, personal protective equipment and work practice controls to be used, cleaning and disinfecting procedures and what to do if a worker becomes sick.

The Department of Homeland Security early last spring designated construction of single-family and multifamily housing as an "Essential Infrastructure Business," allowing construction to continue in places under stay-at-home orders.

While COVID-19 protocols have been the top priority, Robert Matuga, NAHB assistant vice president of labor, safety, and health, adds that builders and subcontractors can't lose sight of the other potential dangers. "Moving forward, builders and their trade subcontractors must not let their guard down to protect workers from other significant jobsite safety hazards, such as falling from ladders, scaffolding, and the building structure; electric shock; working in trenches and excavations; and operating tools and equipment."

NAHB has also launched a new initiative focused on member mental health and wellbeing. The [resources available](#) focus on mental health during the pandemic and can be especially helpful for builders and workers struggling with the challenges faced in 2020.