



ENVIRONMENTAL ESSENTIALS

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Safety during our new normal

As we begin the asphalt and paving season in these unprecedented times, the idea of what is considered normal will probably change as the COVID-19 virus continues to be present in our society for some time to come.

Therefore, as we get the plants and terminals up and running, we can't just start the day or our shift with simply turning things on or having the typical daily safety huddle. Some new protocols have to come into play and our routines have to be adjusted. As we get deeper into the season and the production and activity ramps up, our place of work will become congested with more trucks, which means more people. There should be considerations for staggering of shifts or staggering of personnel at clock-in and clock-out as well as maintaining social distancing in the lunchrooms and plant control room. We will all need to rise to the challenge of operating differently while working to maintain peak production capabilities.

As this article is being written, there is an easing of restrictions in Ontario which should bring the economy back to some sense of normal. Fortunately, the road construction sector has not been hit as hard during this pandemic. However, we still have to ensure the health of our employees in order for our companies to continue to operate. Most companies will have strict protocols for their employees in maintaining physical distancing and proper

sanitizing procedures. Where we may have trouble is the interaction with our customers and contractors who may not be as mindful of the situation as we are. Therefore, it is important that we communicate with our customers and contractors about our procedures and expectations to ensure our plants and paving continue to operate.

Even though we are in the middle of this pandemic, we cannot forget the effect of climate change and the continued focus on the improvement of air quality and emissions for our workers and the public. This cannot be put on the back burner due to possibly lower productions or reduced budgets. This pandemic is providing us an opportunity to think innovatively and further advance our asphalt technologies for a greener future.

To further prioritize health and safety in the asphalt industry, the Plant and Paving Committee has developed a best practices guide which incorporates aspects from member submissions as well as some resources from NAPA. This guide is available on the OAPC website for your reference. ■

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