Safety Decision Making Process – COVID-19

If something seems unsafe or if an incident has occurred....

1. **Can the hazard be removed?**
   
   Is it possible to prevent congregations by rescheduling meetings/appointments/trainings, working from home or another means?

   If not....

2. **Can the hazard be substituted for something less dangerous?**
   
   Unfortunately, because COVID-19 serves no purpose, it’s not really a question to replace it with something less dangerous (unlike a chemical that serves a purpose but it dangerous, so we replace it with a less-dangerous chemical that serves the same purpose). In this case, we just want to completely avoid COVID-19 and for it to go away.

   If not....

3. **Can the hazard be ‘engineered’? Can a barrier be put between the employee and the hazard or can something be re-tooled to make it safer?**
   
   Can we work in separate areas for operational quarantine? Can we use glass barriers/partitions? At the testing sites, we can ask citizens to remain in their vehicles. These are ways to use engineering solutions to put a barrier between us and the virus.

   If not....

4. **Can a process be changed to make it safer?**
   
   We can use social distancing to keep a six (6) foot distance between each other. We can wash our hands and use hand sanitizer. We can routinely disinfect surfaces and items. We can avoid handshakes, hugs and other contact. We can ensure to wash our clothes. We can avoid shared spaces like sharing vehicles. We can check our temperatures to check on signs of an infection. We can each wear a face mask to contain our own droplets (although face masks don’t protect against others’ droplets). These are all great ways to prevent exposures even if we can’t remove the hazard or put up a barrier.

5. **Can we use Personal Protective Equipment to avoid injuries or exposures?**
   
   For our team members who absolutely need to provide services to known potentially infectious persons, PPE can prevent exposures when within six (6) feet and making contact. Respirators filter air-transmitted particles while gloves, gowns and face shields help catch droplets, and each can be disposed so that the droplets and particles aren’t taken home. While hazard removal, engineering and administrative process controls are preferable, if our team members must be ‘up close’ with potentially infectious persons, PPE can make it safer.

   And....

For any safety protocol, have we been trained and trained our teammates to do it?

It’s very important that we know our team’s expectations. For some, the team can work from home. For others, they can work behind a glass barrier. For others, they need to consciously use social distancing and disinfection.
And, for others, their work doesn’t allow for the other controls, so they need to use PPE to get up close. In any of these cases, the first step to success is communication and training.

Finally, part of this communication and training is to promote good situational awareness and avoidance of the dangerous states of mind. We can always better prevent disease exposures with observation, orientation, decision-making and safe actions and we can always keep good situational awareness by avoiding rushing, fatigue, frustration, complacency and distractions.

Ultimately, when we’ve decided on the most effective way to prevent incidents, implemented it, trained and communicated it to our teams and ensured it’s being used during operations, we have much better chances of preventing incidents.

Thank you for your continued safety leadership!