

THE PURDUE LANDSCAPE REPORT

Green Industry Businesses Share Protocols to Maximize the Health and Safety During the Covid-19 Pandemic

By: Kyle Daniel, daniel38@purdue.edu, By: Lindsey Purcell, lapurcel@purdue.edu, By: Cliff Sadof, csadof@purdue.edu, By: Aaron Patton, By: Janna Beckerman, jbeckerm@purdue.edu, By: Tom Creswell, creswell@purdue.edu, By: John Bonkowski, jbonkows@purdue.edu & By: Rosie Lerner, rosie@purdue.edu

Day-to-day activities have changed every aspect of businesses throughout the country. The Green Industry is no exception, with changes implemented to maintain safe working environments for employees and their clients while being compliant with the state's Executive Order. Due to the diversity of services and products that the Green Industry provides, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to maintaining the health and safety of employees and clients. Most companies have developed protocols that fit best within their organization to go above and beyond what was instructed in the Executive Order.

Several businesses were contacted from different sectors within the Green Industry requesting their protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic. These businesses wanted to share their protocols with the industry to help others develop their programs to maximize the health and safety of their employees and clients. We list common general protocols and then specific practices for each industry segment. We then categorized them into two categories based on the target of the measures. *Employee/ Operations* - applies to employee, work crews delivery and office practices, and *Customer* - applies to any interactions with customers. Landscape and turf businesses have employee categories divided into those pertaining to truck work crews and others.

General Practices for All Business Sectors:

- Limit groups of people who are gathered in one place to <10 and maintain "social distancing" of 6 feet apart.
- Remind people to always cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue and throw the tissue away immediately.
- Clean and sanitize frequently during the day, and between shifts with appropriate PPE
- Lathering with water and soap for 20 seconds is still recommended as best prevention even over hand sanitizer
- Stagger start, break, and lunch times to minimize gathering and increase social distancing.

Nursery Businesses:

Employee /Operations

- Limit the number of employees per to one per vehicle unless wearing masks.
- No vehicle sharing unless wearing PPE gloves and mask.
- When possible employees should meet at the site in their own vehicles
- Any employee that is sick or exhibiting symptoms needs to stay home, no exceptions.
- Supervisors have the authority to send home sick employees. Supervisors should constantly monitor employees showing signs of illness and sick employees will not be allowed to work.
- If an employee comes to work sick, they should be isolated and any known areas they may have touched and or contacted should be cleaned immediately using masks and gloves.
- A sign will be placed on the front door asking drivers bringing in deliveries to please wait in their trucks and someone will come out to help them.
- Shipping docks, lunchrooms, bathrooms, door knobs, table surfaces, phones, anything with a handle, will be disinfected several times a day throughout the day.
- Identify cleaning crews and clean after each shift using masks and gloves.

Customer Focus

- No customers allowed in offices.
- Customers with terms in good standing do NOT have to stop back in the office after loading.
- Customers without terms should call in with a credit card number to avoid having to stop back in the office.
- All invoices will get mailed or emailed after they are processed.
- Customers will be encouraged to place orders or make availability inquiries via the website or phone/email/text in lieu of face-to-face interactions.

- Account managers will no longer be making customer visits for the foreseeable future.
- Customers encouraged to stay in or near their trucks. Orders will be loaded for them.

Garden Center Businesses:

Employees Operation Focus

- Limit office personnel on site by utilizing Zoom meetings daily.
- All employees have access to and are strongly encouraged to wear PPE, and use hand sanitizer, masks, wipes, etc.
- Set up networks and computers to allow work from home where possible.
- Upgrade accounting software to give the ability to work remotely.
- Limit employee access to offices, instead meet in larger rooms or outside in the open air
- Staggered start times. Install: 7:30, Maintenance 8:30, Garden Center 9:00 (to avoid as many people in one spot as possible)
- Limiting the number of employees per to one per vehicle unless wearing masks.
- Limit the number of employees per to one per vehicle unless wearing masks.
- No vehicle sharing unless wearing PPE gloves and mask.

Customer

- Offer curbside pickup, delivery, and call in orders. Stage items on shopping carts and handles disinfected after each pickup.
- Close physical store and make sales via websites (i.e. Shopify)
- Limit hours store is open to the public.
- Limit access to the offices from the public by locking doors and placing a sign on them with instructions to call or knock.
- Place hand sanitizer stations all over the store. Especially near time clocks, registers, bathrooms and other high traffic areas.

Supplier Businesses:

Employee/Operations

- Delivery drivers have their assigned trucks.
- Equipment operators have their assigned pieces of equipment.
- Close office doors and only allow employees to enter.
- Hand sanitizer available throughout the offices.

Customer

- Encouraging our customers to call ahead.
- Payment with credit card over the phone.

Landscape and Turf Businesses:

Employee/Operations- Truck/Work Crews

- Provide each employee with their own hand sanitizer, wipes, masks, etc.

- Limit the number of employees per to one per vehicle unless wearing masks.
- No vehicle sharing unless wearing PPE gloves and mask.
- When possible employees should meet at the site in their own vehicles
- Crews to only go to gas stations for gas. Avoid the gas station store by bringing breakfast, lunch from home.
- All employees must adhere to their specific assigned staggered start times in order to limit the amount of people in one location.
- Gloves must be worn when using company tools, or they may not be shared.
- Wash hands after using common shared items: i.e.: fuel pumps/trailer handles, etc.—a wash station will be set up outside service door.
- No personal uniforms or clothing is to be left overnight. Employees are encouraged to wash clothes at home each evening.
- Spray the handles of all of the employee's vehicle doors and handles in the shop parking lot.

Employee/Operations- Others

- Even though it is cleaned frequently, everyone is responsible for sanitizing the restrooms before and after each use.
- First aid kit should have sanitizer and Dawn dish soap included
- Administrative offices are closed—no one is permitted in them other than the office manager.
- The time clock will not be used. Text, email or call times in to office manager daily.
- Upgrade software on laptops and personal computers to give office staff the ability to work remotely.
- Crews and personnel are not allowed to congregate at the shop or in the break room.
- Only come into the office if absolutely necessary.

Customer

- Let all customers know before scheduling a visit to make sure they are comfortable with us onsite.
- Designers should conduct most landscape appointments over the phone, by either calling when onsite or getting the info up front, visit the site, then calling back with questions.
- Designers, salesmen, and customer relations staff are encouraged to make calls from home as possible to limit traffic in landscape offices.
- Limited access to the offices by the public. Locked doors and placed a sign on them with instructions to call.
- Communicating with customers if onsite visit is needed then we are keeping the 6' distance

For additional information, see COVID-19 Guidelines for the Green Industry from Purdue Extension Specialists:

<https://www.purduelandscapereport.org/article/covid-19-guidelines-for-the-green-industry-from-purdue-extension-specialists/>

We would like to give our sincere thanks to the companies that

provided their protocols for navigating Covid-19.

We would also like to thank Mary Breidenbach, Cumulus Design, for her assistance in gathering company responses.

It is the policy of the Purdue University that all persons have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and facilities without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability or status as a veteran. Purdue is an Affirmative Action Institution. This material may be available in alternative formats. 1-888-EXT-INFO Disclaimer: Reference to products in this publication is not intended to be an endorsement to the exclusion of others which may have similar uses. Any person using products listed in this publication assumes full responsibility for their use in accordance with current directions of the manufacturer.

Purdue Landscape Report © Purdue University - www.purduelandscape.com