

Promoting Vaccination among Small Construction Firms: Encouraging Vaccine Acceptance

This document was developed by the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health in coordination with the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)

Because most construction work has continued in-person, workers are at greater risk of becoming infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.ⁱ

Strong confidence in the vaccines within a workplace leads to more people getting vaccinated, which leads to fewer COVID-19 illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Why should small construction firm employers get vaccinated?

Employees look to their employers to set expectations for occupational health and safety, including expectations for preventing the spread of COVID-19 at a worksite. Because over 90% of construction firms in the United States employ 20 or fewer workers,ⁱⁱ getting people at these firms to receive their vaccination is particularly important for preventing COVID-19.

As a small business employer, you can motivate vaccine adoption for your employees by getting your vaccine. In a recent survey conducted by the National Federation of Independent Business, more than half of employees surveyed said that they would take the vaccine if their employer recommended it.^{iv}

More vaccinated workers can reduce hours lost and costs related to illness.

- The number of total lost work hours by full time construction workers increased significantly from 71.6 million during March 2019 through February 2020 to 84.9 during March 2020 through February 2021.
- During the first year of the pandemic, the estimated cost of lost work hours associated with the COVID-19 among U.S. full-time construction workers was \$360 million.ⁱⁱⁱ

How can small construction firm employers encourage vaccination uptake?

- As an employer, you can be a vaccine champion and encourage other leaders at your worksite to be vaccine champions, too. Share your personal reasons for getting vaccinated and remind employees why it is important to be vaccinated.
- Make vaccination easy for your employees:
 - Allow for time off to get the vaccine.
 - Connect employees to a vaccination site if possible.
 - Offer more than one opportunity for vaccination for workers who do not get the vaccine right away
- Share messages with workers about the benefits of protecting themselves, their families, co-workers, and community by getting vaccinated. Provide regular updates on topics like the benefits, safety, side effects, and effectiveness of vaccination.

ⁱ NIOSH Blog, "COVID-19 Poses Big Challenges for Small Construction Firms," at: https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2021/03/09/construction_covid/

ⁱⁱ Dong, X. S., Wang, X., Katz, R., Trahan Cain, C., Rinehart, R. (2018). Fatal injuries among small construction establishments. Available at: [publications_Quarter3-QDR-2018_0.pdf \(cpwr.com\)](https://www.cpr.com/2018/03/09/fatal-injuries-among-small-construction-establishments/)

ⁱⁱⁱ Compilation from U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) Questionnaire. Available at: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/questionnaires.html>.

^{iv} NFIB Research Center: COVID-19 Small Business Survey. Available at: [Covid-19-14-Questionnaire-Write-up-FINAL-Web.pdf \(nfib.com\)](https://www.nfib.com/research/covid-19-small-business-survey/)