



## THE BELT RAILWAY COMPANY OF CHICAGO

Office of the Engineering Department

### ENGINEERING NOTICE

### #21-EN010

Effective 0001, Wednesday, June 30, 2021

**To:** ALL BRC EMPLOYEES

**Subject:** COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

***Engineering Notice 20-EN016 is hereby void.***

#### **Important Information:**

##### **General Information**

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) maintains a website with extensive information on all aspects of COVID-19, including information regarding situation updates, frequently asked questions, prevention & treatment, and a variety of other topics. The CDC website can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

##### **Preventative steps**

As a first phase, we have increased the frequency of cleaning of our regularly-used common areas, such as the General Office Building, Yard Offices, Locker Rooms, Break Rooms, etc. All locations will now be cleaned twice per day, double the previous frequency. We are also in the process of procuring additional hand sanitizer dispensers for our facilities and offices across the BRC.

Social distancing is also key:

- Avoid group events or crowds.
- Minimize face-to-face meetings with both internal and external parties by leveraging electronic means of communication when available.
- If you become sick, including fever above 100.4°F and respiratory difficulties, stay home and inform your supervisor of your condition.

## Travel precautions

- Avoid travel. If you must travel, the guidelines below should be followed:
- Avoid travelling to countries that have been identified as high risk by the Federal Government – the following links are helpful resources:
- US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 travel advisories site <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- Avoid travelling if you are concerned about the quality of health care at your destination.
- Avoid touching high-traffic surfaces when in airports, airplanes and hotels.
- Wipe down your seat area, including armrests, eating tray, seatback pocket and video screen with a disposable disinfectant cloth.
- Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Avoid proximity to people who appear to have cold-like symptoms.
- Use utensils to avoid eating with your fingers.
- Stay hydrated.

## Hygiene best practices

Because preparing for COVID-19 is a shared responsibility, BRC is providing the following best practices as a reminder to guide you on how to protect yourself from this respiratory disease:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. The proper way to wash your hands is for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, after using the washroom and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Use hand sanitizers that contain 60%–95% alcohol on a regular basis.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw the tissue away.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with disposable disinfectant cloths.

## Staying in touch

BRC will communicate via email, the BRC Website and BTV any steps that we are taking to limit exposure or other pertinent updates.

In order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, everyone has a role to play. Much of what you can do is common sense and follows the instruction of public health authorities.

## **Important Information to our Employees Regarding BRC's Response to the Ongoing COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic:**

With the ongoing spread of COVID-19, the health and safety of our employees, customers and surrounding communities are our top priority. BRC's senior leadership team is actively monitoring the situation. An internal Task Force has been formed and is exercising our response plan while continuing to review it based on on-going developments. Here are some key actions we have taken as well as general reminders on actions you should take:

- BRC is following guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and taking appropriate actions to maintain a safe workplace for our employees and to ensure the continuity of our business operations. BRC has implemented CDC recommendations for workplaces by encouraging employees to (1) practice good hygiene like handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer, (2) forego all nonessential travel and consider social distancing, and (3) stay home and seek medical attention

if they are sick or have flu-like symptoms. Social distancing is a concept that uses available space to reduce the risk of infection.

- For your own health and safety – and out of respect to the well-being of your colleagues – we ask you take the following actions should they apply to you:
  - If you are not feeling well or experiencing flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, shortness of breath, etc.), seek medical attention.
  - If you or an immediate household member tests positive for COVID-19 – you must alert your supervisor and BRC's Human Resources Department, immediately.
  - If you or an immediate household member did not test positive for COVID-19, but you or your immediate household member is told by a healthcare or public health professional to quarantine for any amount of time as a result of potential exposure, you also must alert your supervisor and BRC's Human Resources Department, immediately.
  - The BRC Standards for Employee Attendance is not in conflict with these recommendations/requirements, as attendance is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Employees are expected to use customary procedures to mark-off, including timely and complete communication with the Crew Board, where applicable, and/or their usual and customary mark-off reporting supervisors.
- For our field employees, BRC is taking proactive action throughout the network. While the list is not exhaustive, I will highlight some of our efforts:
  - We are making disinfecting surface wipes available in the cabs of BRC locomotives, track machines, and all other vehicles.
  - We have ordered and will install additional hand sanitizer dispensing stations at high-traffic locations throughout BRC property.
  - We are postponing large or nonessential gatherings when possible.
  - We are working with our vendors and alternate suppliers to make hand sanitizer and disinfecting surface wipes available in areas such as meeting rooms, break rooms, locker rooms, and office facilities.
  - We are preparing contingency plans to operate with reduced staffing levels, if necessary.
  - We are preparing contingency plans to relocate employees as per the CDC's social distancing guidance (i.e. physically separate employees who work in close proximity to the extent possible).
- With the onset COVID-19 in the U.S., BRC also recognizes the potential for employee stress and even confusion due to the unfolding situation. With that in mind, and to help ensure the sharing of credible and actionable information, BRC is providing employees with resources from credible sources like the WHO and CDC and is standing up an internal email to field employee questions; [COVID19info@beltrailway.com](mailto:COVID19info@beltrailway.com) which is accessible to all BRC employees.

**Employees are reminded to wash their hands regularly and/or use hand sanitizer (especially after using shared computers, desks, and work areas).**

## **Employee Safety in the Workplace Guidance for Employees – Sick Reporting Management 03/16/2020:**

Should you experience signs or symptoms of feeling ill please report this to your assigned mark-off reporting manager or supervisor.

This would include runny nose, fever 100.4 degrees F, cold or flu like symptoms or respiratory distress.

### **Best Practice:**

Practice maintaining 6 feet away from each other in the workplace and community. This is to minimize someone near to you spreading the virus to you or you to them. Some individuals can test positive but not exhibit ANY symptoms. Symptoms may or may not develop in these individuals. Some people have mild symptoms, or some can exhibit more severe or even life-threatening symptoms.

*If you have been near someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, if you have tested positive for Covid-19 OR if you are experiencing symptoms of a cold or the flu:*

### **SEEK MEDICAL CARE:**

**Contact your primary care physician by telephone and they will advise you how to proceed medically.**

1. Report symptoms or known exposure to your mark-off reporting manager or supervisor.
2. In the event you have a fever of 100.4 degrees F, along with cold/flu like symptoms or respiratory distress, you should plan to self-quarantine for 14 days. This means isolating yourself to your home, or an area of your home if there are other family members present.
3. If you have a job that can be conducted fully or partially from home and you feel well enough to do so, you may have the option to perform this work from home. This will be discussed with you and your manager.
4. Remember Frequent Hand Washing. This cannot be stressed enough. Hand sanitizer is an available option if soap and water are not available in the moment. **Hand Washing is the GOLD STANDARD.**

Washing your hands for 20-30 seconds with a brisk motion, lathering up the soap, washing all surfaces of the hand and between the fingers is a must.

Remember caring for ourselves in the recommended manner will help to keep everyone safer.

## **Managing anxiety about COVID-19 – Information from your EAP:**

There are many aspects to this health crisis that are concerning but there are likely one or two aspects that concern you most.

- When that factor has been identified, start to think through the issue beyond the “what if?” For example, if you are afraid of being quarantined, think about what that might actually be like, how you might get your groceries, how you would stay in touch with friends and family, or what kind of projects you could do.

- We all want to control the uncontrollable, and it feels frustrating and scary when we cannot do so. Instead of trying control those factors (i.e. what if someone rides the train when they are sick?), think about how you would cope with that situation if it happens. We are usually capable of coping with a lot more than we think we can!
  - Consider reminding yourself of other hard times or hard events that you have coped with in your life. You probably did not think you could at the outset!
- Be deliberate about how you get your news. Following the news throughout the day and night does little to inform you and a lot to make you anxious. Consider looking at the news once in the morning and once in the afternoon/evening.
  - Consider a digest/summary news email from a trusted source so that you do not have to sort through all of the details of the websites.
  - Don't read comments after news articles! Think about how you feel when you read the comments - rarely does it feel comforting.
  - Consider turning off the news notifications on your phone. You will likely benefit from reading the news when you are ready for it, not when you are doing other things.
  - Try NOT to read the news right before you go to bed!
- Remember that although the mortality rate of COVID-19 is higher than we would like it to be, consider reframing the data: If you are reading that the mortality rate is 3.4%, then this means that 96.6% will get through this okay!
- Engage in activities to take care of yourself (whatever personally works for you): spend time with your family, find comforting media, movies, books, music, etc., that will give your mind a time-out from this crisis. Take more baths, do more yoga (at home via YouTube!), etc. Consider downloading meditation apps (i.e. Headspace, Calm) and using them daily.
- Yes, this crisis is real, but we do not have to be scared – we have to channel our ability to cope and adapt.
- Please remember your EAP is here to support you. Our counselors will provide in the moment support to help you get through this!

*To make an appointment or to receive more information, contact the EAP directly:*

**(800) 905-0994**

**ONLINE LIBRARY WEB ACCESS: [www.MFSEAP.com](http://www.MFSEAP.com) Company Code: (See Your HR Administrator)**

***Discontinuation of COVID-19 Supplemental Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave:***

The Federal government extended FFCRA (Families First Coronavirus Response Act) to March 31, 2021, on a voluntary basis. The Belt Railway Company of Chicago opted to extend Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave related to COVID-19 through June 30, 2021. **Coverage for Paid Sick Leave and Paid Family Leave will discontinue July 1, 2021.**

## **COVID-19 Guidance for Employees Living with Healthcare Workers – (ENGINEERING):**

The BRC, in its efforts to minimize risk of transmitting COVID-19 among its employees and the larger community, is issuing the following guidance for those employees who may live with a healthcare worker. Healthcare workers are generally at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, particularly if their job duties require them to come into contact with COVID-19 patients. Accordingly, the BRC is recommending that employees who live with healthcare employees take the following precautions daily as instructed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These guidelines can be found on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>. These guidelines can be found in the Centers for Disease Control Publication "*Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19.*"

The guidelines largely reflect the same practices which have been in effect at the BRC for the past month, but do add some additional precautions, such as employee pre-screening and wearing of face masks while at work. The guidelines are as follows:

- **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean work spaces:** Clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment routinely.

Employees who take their temperature prior to their shift who have a temperature higher than 100 degrees Fahrenheit should call their supervisor to report and request further instructions.

These additional precautions will help protect against further transmission of COVID-19 while still allowing the BRC to protect its service commitments to its customers. Please feel free to reach out to your applicable department manager, Belt's Human Resources Department, or the [COVID19info@beltrailway.com](mailto:COVID19info@beltrailway.com) email account with any additional questions.

## **COVID-19 Guidelines for Employees Returning from Out-of-State Travel:**

The BRC, in its efforts to minimize risk of transmitting COVID-19 among its employees and the larger community, is issuing the following guidance for those employees who may travel out of state while certain states and countries are experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases.

The guidelines largely reflect the same practices which have been in effect at the BRC for the past several months, but do add some additional precautions, such as employee pre-screening and wearing of face masks while at work. The guidelines are as follows:

Employees must disclose any COVID-19 symptoms to their Supervisor or Human Resources.

A potential wide range of symptoms have been reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**COVID-19 Prevention Requirements:**

- Assess for elevated temperature or symptoms prior to coming to work for the 14 days following return from vacation; if you suspect you may have symptoms report to your supervisor and await further instructions prior to coming to work.
- Practice effective social distancing at all times. Maintaining 6 feet distance between persons whenever possible.
- Wear a face covering whenever social distancing cannot be achieved, or as additionally required by individual local or state regulations.
- Wash hands frequently in accordance with CDC Guidelines.

**Additional Employee Instructions:**

Employees returning from travel and needing to quarantine under individual local regulations, must report this fact to Human Resources, prior to reporting for work.

Circumstances involving employee self-quarantine will be handled on a case by case basis to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations, and to ensure the BRC workforce is protected.

These additional precautions will help protect against further transmission of COVID-19 while still allowing the BRC to protect its service commitments to its customers. Please feel free to reach out to your applicable department manager, Belt's Human Resources Department, or the [COVID19info@beltrailway.com](mailto:COVID19info@beltrailway.com) email account with any additional questions.

**Best Practices to Remain Safe During COVID Resurgence in North America- November 2020:**

Illinois continues to see a rise in COVID-19 cases within the past month. The key to combatting this trend is the continued vigilance of all BRC employees to take efforts designed to keep ourselves, our co-workers, and our families safe.

Working to reduce the rate of virus transmission takes a few essential steps on the part of everyone at the Belt:

**Social Distancing**

Close contact with others, especially while eating, can provide an environment where it easy for the virus to spread. Keep your distance.

Maintain the recommended 6-foot separation from others to help reduce the risk of spread. Limit the time of your interactions, the longer the time, the greater the risk.

### **Mask Requirement**

Since July 17th, The BRC has required that all employees wear masks while on the property, and when social distancing cannot be maintained.

Employees are encouraged to wear masks as much as possible, given the ability of a mask to help stop the spread of the virus to others effectively.

Even if someone has COVID-19, and does not know it, the use of a mask will help to reduce the risk to others. This may protect not only your co-workers, but others they care for at home.

Masks are new in our society, and it can be easy to forget to have one. One recommendation is to place a "Go-Kit" in your vehicle with spare masks and antibacterial wipes, so it is available when needed.

### **Hand Washing**

Regular and thorough hand washing for 20 seconds is sufficient in many instances to kill COVID-19 bacteria. Practice counting to ensure that the sufficient time is taken and wash often.

### **Home Safety**

COVID-19 prevention is important at home as well. Try to avoid crowded places and indoor gatherings where masks are not in use both with your family and with others. Wear a mask regularly.

When you are out in public wear a mask, wash your hands often, and maintain social distancing. Limit gatherings with others, it's a temporary solution that will help the long-term problem.

If someone is diagnosed as COVID-19 positive at home, contact your supervisor. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has guidance on how to help them and keep yourself safe.

### **If You Get Sick**

Between COVID-19 and flu season it is easy to get sick. When it happens, the best advice is to notify your supervisor, who will confer with BRC's independent medical consultant. You will likely be instructed to STAY HOME, rest, drink fluids, and take a test to verify whether or not you have contracted COVID-19. If symptoms develop or worsen contact your health care provider and then notify your supervisor after you have contacted your health care provider. If you test positive, notify your supervisor, and stay home as per your health care provider's instructions until you are able to return to work.

### **Final Thoughts**

This virus has created a difficult time for everyone. It's disruptive, aggravating, and potentially dangerous. Yet, on the BRC we are all railroaders, and we come through many difficult challenges together, making each day better than the last.

It's not easy, but we rise to the challenge every day and we achieve success. The situation we face today is no different, and I am confident that we can keep ourselves, our families, and our workplace safe if we continue to work as a team.

### **Use of Masks:**

Masks are *required* for employees and contractors within closed spaces, including the GOB and vehicles with more than one occupant being used for company business.

Mask use is *required*, regardless of whether 6-foot social distancing guidelines can be achieved.



Employees at their workstations, when six-foot separation can be achieved, are not required to wear masks.

When leaving workstations, or moving within buildings, masks are required.

Masks are available at on-duty points.

Scott Schiemann  
Chief Engineer

Engineering Notices in Effect:

2018	001, 003, 004, 005,009
2019	004, 007, 010, 012, 013
2020	001, 011
2021	001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 010