WOWRA Wisconsin Onsite Water Recycling Association

Understanding Coronavirus Exposure for Plumbing Professionals

Credit: Pete Demarco Executive Vice President of Advocacy and Research – The IAPMO Group

In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) started monitoring the outbreak of a new coronavirus which ultimately was named COVID-19. The virus was first identified in Wuhan, China. This article is intended to provide practical guidance for plumbing professionals who work on sanitary waste and sewer systems on how to protect themselves, their loved ones and their coworkers during the current pandemic.

Coronaviruses are so named because, when viewed under a microscope, they have protrusions that resemble a crown. They belong to a family of viruses common in both humans and many animal species. In rare occurrences, animal coronaviruses can mutate to the point where they are able to also infect humans, which is likely what occurred in China late last year. The potential for viruses that cross over from animals to humans to develop into an epidemic, happens when the virus can then be transmitted between humans. The COVID-19 virus is highly transmissible between humans and can cause respiratory illness and even death.

So, what are the implications for those who work in the plumbing industry and what steps can plumbers take to stay safe? It is likely that the COVID-19 coronavirus can indeed be spread through building sanitary drainage systems. This became apparent when the Chinese government identified an outbreak in a Hong Kong high-rise building a few weeks ago (see the IAPMO white paper).

Therefore, for as long as the pandemic is still active, it should be assumed by anyone working on a sanitary drainage system that the virus is present. Considering the potential to come into contact with water and aerosols that contain the coronavirus when working on sanitary systems or sewers, it is highly recommended that plumbers wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including a full face shield that is worn over safety glasses, and gloves.

Of course, plumbers work on sanitary drainage systems that contain fecal matter and a host of dangerous pathogens every day. Taking careful precautions to prevent contact with wastewater and proper hand and arm hygiene is a matter of good practice for plumbers. In the United States, the Occupational Safety and

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APRIL 2020

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Contact Us: WOWRA PO Box 833

Germantown, WI 53022 Phone: 888-782-6815

Fax: 888-287-4116 info@wowra.com www.wowra.com Health Administration (OSHA) provides standards for worker protection. OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1926, Safety and Health Regulations for Construction provides the requirements for construction worker safety, including plumbers who work on sanitary drains, vent systems and sewers. The standards are available free at https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926.

The most important subsections for plumbers to review are: 1926.20 - General safety and health provisions; 1926.21 - Safety training and education; 1926.22 - Recording and reporting of injuries; 1926.23 - First aid and medical attention; 1926.28 - Personal protective equipment; 1926.50 - Medical services and first aid; 1926.95 - Criteria for personal protective equipment; 1926.102 - Eye and face protection and 1926.103 - Respiratory protection.

Additionally, ASSE International's Series 12000 Standard, Professional Qualifications Standard for Infection Control Risk Assessment for All Building Systems, is a standard that sets minimum criteria for the training and certification of pipe trades craftspeople, and other construction and maintenance personnel, on how to safely work in an environment with the potentially deadly diseases that may be present within worksites. While the pandemic remains ongoing, ASSE International is making the ASSE Series 12000 Standard available for free at https://asse-plumbing.org/12000-2018. The ASSE 12000 certification training addresses viruses, including the Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus, but does not specifically reference COVID-19. We welcome plumbers from across the globe to consider professional qualification for infection control risk assessment especially when working on sanitary systems that have a high probability of being contaminated with COVID-19, such as healthcare facilities and hospitals.

Finally, common sense still reigns supreme. Plumbers are advised to increase the frequency of hand washing and wash for at least 20 seconds with soap and water (even longer hand washing time is good practice after contact with wastewater); avoid touching of the face; cover any open cuts or wounds and wear proper PPE. If you personally come into close proximity, or into direct contact with an infected person, immediately report the incident to your supervisor and to your doctor or healthcare provider.

Good workplace and tool cleaning practices are also extremely important. Avoid sharing of tools with coworkers to the greatest extent possible. When choosing cleaning chemicals, look for cleaning agents with claims against viral pathogens. If such cleaning agents are not available, use soap and water and dry tools thoroughly after use. Keep your PPE clean as well by following manufacturer instructions carefully.

With no vaccine or treatment regimen currently available, it is important for all workers to be able to recognize the symptoms associated with contracting the coronavirus, which include fever, shortness of breath, and persistent cough. Symptoms can take between 2 to 14 days to become apparent after exposure to the virus. If you start to feel ill, stop work immediately so as to protect your coworkers and others around you, go home, contact your doctor and follow your doctor's orders! This is critically important when working in a facility that houses immuno-compromised people.

As usual, plumbers are on the front lines fighting the battles that keep people safe. By working carefully and thoughtfully, we can also keep ourselves and our loved ones safe as we deal with and defeat COVID-19!

Looking for Jobsite Stories – Both Good and Bad

To be clear, we're looking for good stories about both good and bad installations....

We're constantly looking for ways to improve our association and one of those ways is to increase the relevance of this publication. To that end, we're looking to include more feature stories about projects

Where's the Government Relations Report?

There's a lot going on and <u>WOWRA has you covered</u>. Our goal is to highlight the work we do, every day, for you and the industry in a stand-alone publication. So, the government relations report is now being sent to you separately. Look for this additional communication each month from WOWRA, providing news and insights on the issues affecting our industry – licensing, plan review, executive orders, legislation, court rulings, code committees, technical advisory committees, study groups and task forces, elections and more.



Safety Matters

OSHA's Recordkeeping Requirements During the COVID-19 Pandemic

OSHA has issued temporary enforcement guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic for Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (OSHA Form 300) required under 29 CFR Part 1904. Contractors will not have to report COVID-19 cases unless it's clear that the employee caught the virus on a job site. Absent this guidance, construction companies would have had to report all illnesses or track the origins of the coronavirus infection for each affected employee. How would a contractor know a virus was contracted at work? A good indicator, for instance, would be several employees on a single jobsite who all become ill. No specific standards exist for coronavirus and construction, so OSHA is looking to existing standards (bloodborne pathogens, respirators) for guidance and encouraging social distancing, hand washing, masks, disinfecting tools, and other control measures.

WC Classification

A new Worker's Compensation category has ben created for furloughed employees who are being paid but are not working. Because WC premiums are based on compensation, paying employees and using their regular work classification code would result in premium due, even though the employees are not at risk. The new category has a \$0.00 premium per \$100.00 of payroll, so furloughed employees can be compensated without generating and liability for WC premiums.

2021 Joint Winter Conference

Thursday, January 14 – Friday, January 15 Chula Vista Resort | Wisconsin Dells, WI



We'll have keynote speakers, breakout session, an exhibit hall, and networking events, all planned with YOU in mind. Come for one day or come for both. Chula Vista offers great value, a huge waterpark, one of the best steakhouses in America, and more.

Do you have a topic or speaker that you'd like to hear at the Conference? Are you interested in exhibiting, sponsoring, or presenting?

Give us a call at (888) 782-6815!

Wastewater and Coronavirus (COVID-19): What are the risks?

Information from NOWRA and the University of Minnesota on Wastewater and COVID-19. Click Here to view report

It's Your Business

Will Business Income Coverage Pay for Lost Income Related to COVID-19?

Business insurance policies can vary, so we suggest talking with your insurance agent/broker if you feel like you have lost business income as a result of COVID-19. Generally, commercial property and business income coverages rely on industry standard Insurance Services Office (ISO) forms. These forms only provide coverage for loss of Business Income caused by direct physical loss or damage to the property. Additionally, the ISO forms exclude loss or damage caused by any virus, bacterium or other microorganism that induces or is capable of inducing physical distress, illness or disease.

Business Contracts and COVID-19

WOWRA has among a group of organizations who had the opportunity to hear from Attorney David Turiciano about the effects of the current health emergency on existing contracts, new contracts and getting paid.

For existing contracts, there is generally what is called a *force majeure* clause that allows either party a way to claim that the contract could not be completed because of forces beyond their control. The pandemic and the declaration of a health emergency, for instance, is beyond control as an unknown and so the clause may be a defense if a project is delayed or cancelled.

At this point, however, the potential for a delay or cancellation that is related to a pandemic is more predictable and so the question is whether that is foreseeable. If it is, it needs to be specifically identified as an act that can cause the contract to be amended.

Finally, *doing* work and *getting paid* for that work are two different things. Nobody really knows how the economy will rebound, so be careful that you are paid for your work in advance, at time of completion, or that you have enforceable lien rights. Good recordkeeping is always a best practice, but the potential consequences of those practices is significantly higher in a volatile market.

New Posting Requirement

On March 25, the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division published workplace posters that small and midsize employers can use to fulfill their obligations to notify employees of their rights to expanded paid sick leave and expanded paid Family and Medical Leave Act leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The poster should be up now. If employees are working from home, the Department of Labor says:

"An employer may satisfy this requirement by e-mailing or direct mailing this notice to employees, or posting this notice on an employee information internal or external website."

Employers must share these notices with current employees, including new hires, but need not do so with those who have been recently laid off. Employers also have no obligation to provide the notice to prospective employees.

Updates from DSPS

Electronic Plan Review Materials

<u>Emergency Order 22 requires</u> electronic plan submission. DSPS has created tutorials to assist you in your transition from paper to electronic submission. Please see:

Memo on Emergency Order 22 Electronic Plan Submission Requirements for more details.

POWTS Electronic Plan Submission Tutorial

License Renewals and Continuing Education

Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services Office of the Secretary 4822 Madison Yards Way PO Box 8363 Madison WI 53708-8368



Phone: 608-266-1352 Web: http://dsps.wi.gov Email: dsps@wisconsin.gov

Tony Evers, Governor Dawn B. Crim, Secretary

Memorandum

Date: April 10, 2020

To: Cross Connection Control Testers Automatic Fire Sprinkler System Testers Dwelling Contractor Qualifiers Elevator Mechanics Elevator Mechanics – Restricted Lift Mechanics POWTS Maintainers Registered Electricians

From: Dawn B. Crim, Secretary-designee

RE: Continuing Education (CE) Waiver Requests During Public Health Emergency

We are working hard to ensure that all our customers are aware of the steps we are taking to maintain services and support our constituents during the public health emergency. We also understand that, as a result of COVID-19 related interruptions and cancellations, some individuals with licenses expiring in the near future may experience difficulty meeting continuing education requirements. Therefore, we are accepting requests for CE waivers for licenses that are renewing during the public health emergency. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If you would like to request a waiver, please include your request and a supporting personal statement with your application materials. In your personal statement, be sure to indicate how and why the COVID-19 public health emergency prevented you from completing your continuing education requirements. When possible, requests for waiver should be emailed to the department at <u>dspscredtrades@wisconsin.gov</u>. Due to delays in mail service and COVID-19 related staffing adjustments, requests sent via mail may be delayed.

We know that most conventions, conferences and in-person learning opportunities are unavailable at the moment. However, we encourage all credential-holders—regardless of license renewal dates—to prioritize their license requirements, explore remote CEU offerings and use any available time to pursue opportunities. For many fields, online learning is and has been readily available and accessible and we will take this into consideration when we review waiver requests.

Additional COVID 19 Resources

- To view the spread of COVID-19 throughout Wisconsin, check out the Wisconsin Department of Health's tracker, which shows Wisconsin's cumulative total and newly reported cases of COVID-19.
- If you have questions regarding unemployment, contact the <u>Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development</u> by calling 608-266-3131.
- If you are a veteran affected by COVID-19, the <u>Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs</u> is here to help you. They can be reached at 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387).
- For small business inquiries, call the <u>Small Business Administration's</u> (SBA) Wisconsin District Office at 414-297-3941 or SBA's disaster assistance customer service center at 1-800-659-2955.
- For information regarding <u>schools</u> and <u>childcare</u>, please click <u>here</u>. You can also call the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction at 608-266-3390 or 1-800-441-4563 and the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families at 608-422-7000.
- If you are a farmer, retailer or restaurant owner please click <u>here</u> for resources from the Wisconsin Department
 of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's (DATCP). You can also call the DATCP Wisconsin Farm Center at
 1-800-942-2474, Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-422-7128, and General Line at 608-224-5012.
- To find information on public utilities and internet, call the <u>Public Service Commission of Wisconsin</u> (PSC) at 1-800-225-7729 or 608-266-2001.
- For DMV online services and other transportation needs, please visit the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's <u>website</u> or call 608-264-7447.
- If you have questions regarding filing your taxes or tax returns, please call <u>Wisconsin's Department of Revenue</u> at 608-266-2772.

Wisconsin Fund – A Reminder

While most of you are familiar, it's helpful every now and again to provide a reminder about the Wisconsin Fund, a program that provides grants to homeowners and small commercial businesses to help offset a portion of the cost for the repair, rehabilitation, or replacement of existing failing Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (POWTS). WOWRA has worked hard over the last several years to continue and increase allocations to the Wisconsin Fund and to review the eligibility requirements.

Currently, eligibility is based upon several criteria, including household income and age of the structure. 67 counties out of Wisconsin's 72 counties, the City of Franklin, and the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin participate in the program. County government officials assist interested individuals in determining eligibility and in preparation of grant applications.

More information is available by clicking <u>HERE</u>.

NOWRA's Statement On Essential Work

Onsite and decentralized treatment systems provide wastewater infrastructure for 86 million Americans and are essential for a variety of reasons:



National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association

Preventing health and environmental risks. Contamination from a malfunctioning system is a health risk to homeowners, nearby neighbors, water wells, groundwater supplies and the environment. These problems may become acute during this crisis as more people use disinfecting wipes and paper towels which are flushed into their onsite system, creating sewage backups, and other problems.

Protecting other elements of critical infrastructure in unsewered areas. Many other companies and businesses which are deemed essential infrastructure -- from chemical manufacturers and Walmart to health clinics and medical supply houses – are served by large onsite systems. If their wastewater treatment fails, they often cannot operate.

Ensuring that new and in-process construction projects can move forward. All construction in unsewered areas requires some type of onsite system for business or residential occupancy. Unless an onsite system can be installed, other critical infrastructure businesses won't be unable to expand existing facilities or open new ones, In addition, homeowners, businesses, developers and builders need timely system installation to ensure unnecessary financial damages due to loss of deposits, expiration of lines of credit, changes in loan qualification status, or other funding related problems.

Online Training Opportunities Approved for Credit in Wisconsin



Whether you are new to the onsite/decentralized industry or continuing your professional development, you have come to the right place for septic system related education!

Taught by experts in the industry, NOWRA's Academy offerings cover the fundamentals of the profession as well as advanced training in multiple topics. Offerings include those developed from a national perspective and those meeting specific state requirements.

The courses included can be taken at a discounted rate as a WOWRA/NOWRA

Member or at a higher rate as a Non-Member of NOWRA. You can become a member of NOWRA by joining WOWRA. These course have been approved for DSPS continuing education for master plumber, journeyman plumber, master plumber restricted service, journeyman plumber restricted service, commercial and UDC plumbing inspector, POWTS inspector, POWTS maintainer, and soil certification tester.

Available course are shown below. You can receive credit for each unit or for the entire program. Find out more at <u>https://www.pathlms.com/NOWRA</u>.

Treatment Overview (1.5 Hours Credit) Wastewater Characteristics (1.5 Hours Credit) Soil and Site Evaluation (1.5 Hours Credit) Soil Based Gravity and Pressure Distribution (1.5 Hours Credit) Pumps and Controls (1.0 Hours Credit) Operations and Maintenance (1.0 Hours Credit) A to Z Overview (8 Hours Credit)

NOWRA Benefits

At WOWRA's Annual Meeting, we had the opportunity to information about national developments affecting hear about the many things that NOWRA - our national association - is doing to support our industry. Here's a partial list of what they do to support us all. We encourage you to learn more and be a part of both your State and National associations.

Representation in Washington and in Your State

NOWRA is working to secure legislative and policy changes which foster expanded use of onsite and decentralized technology and which can help the industry address the policy, management, and financial issues caused in large part by neglect at the federal level. In 2014, NOWRA established a strong lobbying presence in Washington intended to increase our industry's share of new construction from 30% to 35%, secure more federal funding to address challenges facing the industry, and get EPA to change policies which discriminate against our industry.

Septic Locator

Every NOWRA member receives a free listing on the Septic Locator, the only national, searchable directory of providers of onsite wastewater management industry research, How-to manuals, regulations, services. Your listing is controlled by you -- you can change contact information, services offered and other information in real time. Coming soon you will have the chance to enhance your listing as well.

Errors & Omissions Insurance for Designers and Inspectors.

NOWRA partnered with <u>The Powderhorn Agency</u>, to endorse their Errors and Omissions insurance coverage for Septic Systems Designers and Inspectors. If your design or inspection work is primarily residential, you may find this coverage to be significantly less expensive than similar coverage from your insurance carrier.

Pro-Sept Residential Septic Repair and Replacement Plan

You can help your customers protect themselves against catastrophic septic repairs or system replacement by recommending they consider the Pro-Sept warranty program. You help yourself at the same time, as NOWRA members earn \$30 for each customer referral.

Onsite Journal

NOWRA has resumed publication of the Onsite Journal magazine. This 4-color magazine offers useful onsite wastewater, reports from state affiliates and industry vendors, and updates on NOWRA programs and services of interest. Published guarterly.

Continuing Education Opportunities

NOWRA has established the Installer Academy as the national educational entity for the decentralized wastewater industry to ensure that quality training programs are available for all industry practitioners. By participating in NOWRA's Education Programs, members gain a learned foundation that continuously builds personal and professional opportunities. NOWRA has an extensive Online Learning Academy, a continuing education option for members to obtain the CEUs they need to stay in business. All of NOWRA's online courses have been approved for continuing education credits in Wisconsin!

Resource Library

NOWRA's Resource Library is intended to be a one-stop portal to help you identify critical information online which can help you manage your business. Published financing, public outreach materials, and archived training materials are among the valuable items contained in this always growing library.

Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference

Since 2015, NOWRA has held its annual conference in conjunction with various state affiliates organizations, teaming up to offer the Onsite Wastewater Mega-Conference -- the largest national conference and trade show solely dedicated to onsite wastewater business. For details on recent Mega-Conference's visit NOWRA's Education and Training section on the website.

Leadership

NOWRA provides all members with opportunities to have a voice in its affairs. Whether you express that by voting in NOWRA's Board of Directors elections, participating in our Annual Meeting, commenting on proposals, volunteering your time on a committee or task force, or simply sharing your views with a board member, NOWRA welcomes and encourages your involvement in our activities. The greater the involvement of its members, the stronger our industry becomes, and the better we are able to work to positively shape its future.

Order Your Septic System Operation & Management Booklets

Order Form

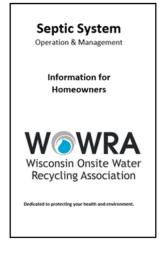
WOWRA Homeowner's Manual

The WOWRA Homeowner's Manual is a great tool for onsite professionals to provide customers with information on their septic system!

The manual includes information on septic system operation and management and provides answers to frequently asked questions.

Manuals are available for purchase for \$0.75 per manual plus shipping (varies by quantity).

Questions? Contact the WOWRA office at 888/782-6815 or info@wowra.com.



To purchase, complete the form below and return to WOWRA.

Company Name				
Address				
			ZIP	
Phone		Email		
By Chacky Davable		ity x \$0.75 = \$.00 (+ Shipping)	
By Check: Payable				
By Credit Card:				
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Type of Card Account #		Visa AmEx Disc		
Exp. Date			CVV Code	
Billing Address				
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WOWRA Membership

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Ashland	Chippewa	Douglas	Green	Kenosha	Marathon	Oneida	Price	Shawano	Washingto
Barron	Clark	Dunn	Green Lake	Kewaunee	Marinette	Outagamie	Racine	Sheboygan	Waukesha
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Business Promotion Program



Business Promotion Offer Your *Best Value* for 2020

WOWRA is pleased to offer a simple way to cover all of you promotional activities for 2020. Select the package that works for you! Some including a membership (\$230 value), a Joint Conference exhibitor booth (\$500 value), tabletop displays at our seminars (4+ at \$200 each); advertising in the monthly newsletter to the industry (\$1,200, \$700, \$500, \$300 value, depending on size of ad), ad/link from website (\$300 value), and published press releases (\$50 each).

Platinum	 Platinum Promotional Package 2020 Membership Joint Conference Exhibit Booth Tabletop at WOWRA Seminars Full-page ad (8½ x 11) in monthly WOWRA News Up to 4 press releases in WOWRA News Link on the WOWRA Website to your website 	\$2,500
Gold	 Gold Promotional Package 2020 Membership Half-page ad (8½ x 5½) in WOWRA News Tabletop at WOWRA Seminars Up to 2 press releases in WOWRA News Link on the WOWRA website to your website 	\$1,500
Silver	 Silver Promotional Package 2020 Membership Quarter-page ad (4¼ x 4½) in WOWRA News 1 press releases in WOWRA News Link on the WOWRA website to your website 	\$900
Bronze	 Bronze Promotional Package Eighth-page page ad (2½ x 3½) in WOWRA News 	\$400

This is a great opportunity to promote your business to your target audience! There's simply no better value for those interested in reaching the POWTS industry.

BONUS: You'll receive the appreciation of the industry! We appreciate the value you bring through information about products and services that can same time and money. We also appreciate your support for and commitment to WOWRA and the work we do to protect and advance the industry – something that benefits all of us!

Questions? Contact us at 888-782-6815 or info@wowra.com.



Quality is a standard, not an extra.



Wieser Concrete provides superior septic/holding tank wastewater solutions with innovative, cost-effective, and high-quality precast products our customers can count on. **UNIFORM QUALITY** — Precast tanks from Wieser are manufactured in a controlled environment ensuring consistent quality and structure.

STRENGTH — Wieser tanks are structurally engineered and utilize post-tensioning to ensure strength and durability.

PROVEN PERFORMANCE AND DESIGN — Wieser Concrete has been manufacturing precast concrete tanks since 1965. Wieser tanks are designed with strength and durability in mind and continue to be the choice of contractors who demand outstanding performance and consistent design for their projects. Wieser tanks are vacuum-tested, watertight structures that guarantee maximum service and longevity.

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Contact Nolan Insurance to learn more.



800-266-6526 www.nolanins.com EMC Milwaukee Branch 16455 W. Bluemound Road Brookfield, WI 53005 855-495-1800 www.emcins.com

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Quotable

count on

"Since 1979, COLE Publishing has highlighted the unsung and sometimes dangerous work of wastewater professionals. The country could not function without the dedication of our workforce to ensure the treatment and safe recycling of wastewater for nearly one-third of U.S. residents who rely on septic systems." ~ Onsite Installer (April 2020) regarding the essential nature of our work.

"...ensure that drinking water and wastewater employees are considered essential workers by state authorities when enacting restrictions such as shelter in place orders to curb the spread of Covid-19." ~ EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler

"(EPA Administrator Andrew) Wheeler's letter reaffirms NOWRA's statement that wastewater professionals in our industry are essential to maintaining this vital area of critical infrastructure." ~ NOWRA

WOWRA Board of Directors (2020/2021)

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Mission Statement: To advance the education of and to protect and promote the profession of onsite wastewater technology in Wisconsin on behalf of our membership.