

Field Crew Safety Concerns

Broadcast stations that are actively covering the COVID-19 related health concerns of their community will often need to address complex health care issues.

Broadcasters act as first informers and are often on the front lines of emergencies, sometimes risking their own lives to provide their communities with critical information. NAB has examined some guidance given to schools, EMS personnel and businesses for topics to consider as stations work to keep staff safe.

NOTE: Local health authorities should be partners in all health care actions and decisions.

Communication

Does our station's overall communication to field crews stress common sense preventative actions as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)?

Protection

- Are we providing our team with appropriate supplies?
- Who will provide hand sanitizer, antiseptic wipes and other disinfectants in all vehicles?
- What hand hygiene should be performed when entering the vehicle?
- Are we providing our field crews with the necessary training?
- Are authorities recommending wearing masks and/or gloves?
- Do we have N95 grade masks/respirator for our team to wear?
- Should the respirator be worn at all times outside of the station?
- Have our field crews been trained in how to fit and dispose of the appropriate masks?
- Can we interview people from six feet away to keep a safe distance?
- Can we do some interviews remotely (Skype, Facetime, etc.)?
- Can we ask people who are on location to safely shoot video for our use?

Evaluation

- Is the location safe, based on common sense, for our field crew to visit?
- Is there a warning about coronavirus cases in that specific location?
- What guidance are local health care authorities providing for that location?
- Have the people we may talk to had any positive test results indicating the presence of the coronavirus?
- Has an interviewee who had the coronavirus been cleared by health authorities to be in public?
- Which local medical professionals/authorities/EMS can provide us with information?
- Have field crews been told of how they can do field evaluations to stop production?
- Do they know the symptoms and risk factors for the coronavirus?
- How can we brief our field crews on safety procedures and evaluation?
- If crews in the field start to feel sick, who do they call?

Prevention

Will field crews be asked to wash their hands before entering the building?

What vehicle interior signage can remind crews to avoid touching their faces?

Will field gear be cleaned at the end of each shift?

Will vehicles be cleaned at the end of each shift?

What care will be given to microphones used by the field crew?

If crews feel sick in the field, do they return to the station or head immediately to medical providers?

Reminder: based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advisories, it is critical to maintain the confidentiality of staff members as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and all other applicable laws.

This guidance, like all current health care advisories, is based on current knowledge of COVID-19. As the CDC indicates in all guidance they provide for employers, when additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads and how severe it is, this guidance may be updated. Stations are encouraged to work closely with local health officials to determine a course of action for their employees and business operation.