COVID-19 Litigation and Ways for Firms to Reduce Risk Webinar

As businesses return to the workplace and resume or expand operations, they face a variety of COVID-19-related employment challenges. How they respond to those challenges will substantially impact their exposure to legal claims from employees and others. Early trends are already
emerging that highlight a variety of legal theories and claims arising from employers' efforts to return employees to work. Even while these theories play out in courts, and while government guidance and notions of “best practices” continue to change and evolve, there are steps employers can take now to help reduce their potential exposure to COVID-19 related employment claims.

ACEC is hosting another FREE webinar on "COVID-19 Litigation and Ways for Firms to Reduce Risk." The webinar will be held on Wednesday, July 8, 2020, 1:30-2:30 PM (Eastern). Jessica Brown and Karl Nelson of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP will explore a variety of COVID-19 risk issues:

- Whether employers face liability for terminating employees who fail or refuse to follow COVID-19 protocols
- Evolving theories of liability for alleged exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace
- Employer strategies for mitigating workplace COVID-19 claims, including application of workers’ compensation remedies and whether waivers may play an effective role
- Appropriate use of health screening measures consistent with state and federal guidance.

To register for the webinar, click here.

Stimulus Packages for a Better Normal: A Global View Webinar

What have the impacts of the 2008-2009 stimulus packages taught us? Facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis globally, what should governments at all levels do to seize this unique opportunity to plan for tomorrow with a pipeline of future-ready infrastructure assets?

In this webinar, WSP experts will share lessons learned from their respective regions and explore strategies that can address gaps and opportunities, focusing on resilient, green and digital infrastructure—to set the stage for a better normal for all.

Below are two webinars WSP set up to accommodate different times. Click on the links with each session to register.

Session 1: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 10:00-10:45 am CT
Presenters: Matthew Lugg OBE, Head of Profession, WSP in the UK; Razi Chagla, Principal Consultant, WSP in Canada; and Michael Meyer, Senior Advisor, WSP USA
To register for this webinar, click here.

Session 2: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 5:00-5:45 pm CT
Presenters: James Smithers, National Executive, Infrastructure Investment Decisions, WSP in Australia; Razi Chagla, Principal Consultant, WSP in Canada; and Michael Meyer, Senior Advisor, WSP USA
To register for this webinar, click here.

ACEC Research Institute to Host Expert Roundtable on Post-COVID-19 Engineering Industry

The ACEC Research Institute will host one more virtual expert roundtable over the coming month exploring the post-COVID-19 engineering industry and the challenges and opportunities for engineering firms. Right now, we are focused on the short-term, but this session will look farther out to the
horizon to help firm leaders think about what the marketplace will be like and what they need to do to succeed.

The Institute will live-stream the roundtable and invites ACEC members—and non-members—to attend and participate in the discussion. The roundtable will be an hour-long and will allow for questions from the audience. To register, click on the link below.

- July 16 Panel: Funding in the New Normal (1:30 pm ET)

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Reopening Jobsites with Workers' Health and Safety in Mind

Construction has seen demanding environments before, but COVID-19 has created a unique challenge. While protecting the health of workers remains top priority, ensuring project success remains vital for recovery. Join industry experts Andrew Cameron of Hensel Phelps, Luciano Lozano of Beldon Roofing Company and Raymond Levitt, former Civil and Environmental Engineering professor at Stanford, as they share their insights on construction's new normal and the solutions needed to ensure worker safety and project efficiency as you return to work. This webinar will be held on July 15, 2020 at 1:00 PM in Central Time (US and Canada). To register for the webinar, click here.

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Measuring Sublease Activity Throughout the Pandemic - Vol. 1
by Cushman & Wakefield

THE NEW NORMAL
The ongoing effects of COVID-19 have created a need for companies to re-evaluate space occupancy. Life as we know it has changed and so has the workplace. What is the new normal? Once unfamiliar, factors such as work-from-home (WFH) policies, stay-at-home orders and social distancing measures have become the new norm. What does this mean for the sublease market? New and competing pressures have been placed on space considerations.

THE SPACE CHALLENGE
While the pandemic has impacted the office and industrial markets differently, both asset classes are contending with two right-sizing scenarios: the disposal of unneeded space or the expansion into needed space.

- OFFICE: As employee headcounts change and WFH measures expand, companies may need less space while others may no longer need anticipated expansion space. On the contrary, some companies may expand square footage in order to de-densify and meet social distancing requirements, exemplified in the 6 Feet Office. Firms headquartered in urban environments may consider taking additional sublease space in the suburbs to avoid employee use of crowded public transportation in an effort to maintain social distancing.

- INDUSTRIAL: Due to the pandemic, some companies experienced major disruptions to supply chains such as site closings and product shortages. As a protection method against future market shocks, companies may expand locations in order to create redundancies in supply chains. When stay-at-home orders spread across the country, certain occupiers experienced a dramatic uptick in product demand (e.g., toilet paper, cleaning products) whereas others saw a drastic drop (e.g., automotive parts). Occupiers that have seen a sharp increase in demand
may take more space to hold extra inventory. Conversely, companies with slow demand may dispose of unnecessary warehouse space as inventory levels decrease. Similar to office, industrial users may also seek a larger footprint to uphold social distancing recommendations or de-densify.

THE RETURN
Although it is still too soon to know the overall impact of additional sublease space across the markets due to COVID-19, this report is the first in a series that will provide updates on both office and industrial sublease space covering the U.S., Canadian and Mexican markets. Stay tuned for the Q2 2020 update with market-by-market details. What does the COVID-19 era mean for sublease space? Will sublease activity stagnate or take over the market?

Click here to download the full report.

Covering Coronavirus: Risk Management & Employee Benefits Considerations

The global COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic remains both dynamic and fluid. We continue to see unprecedented disruptions at home and abroad. In this issue, we take a focused look at the below topics. To see the complete issue, click here.

1. Checking Idle Properties for Legionnaire’s Disease
2. FMCSA Update
3. New Pandemic Market Report
4. Medical Liability Risk
5. Managing Injury Risks for Remote Workers
6. OSHA’s New Guidance for Employers
7. Do Employers Have to Pay for Coronavirus Testing?
8. Presumptive Compensability Legislation Update

Visit epicbrokers.com/coronavirus to catch up on all our coverage.

Continuity of Command & Control for Essential Workers in a Confined Space

Ross & Baruzzini | MACRO offers guidance on ways to use operational technology in and around control rooms allowing partners to continue delivering their services safely and with maximum effectiveness. In an episode of ‘The New Normal’ Conversations with Chris Runde, Ross & Baruzzini Principal Consultant and Paul Mallon, Executive Consultant Ross & Baruzzini Mobility Systems & Communications division, they discuss possible ways to reduce COVID-19 exposure risks.

To see the video of the Zoom meeting that was recorded on June 11th, click here. Download the Continuity of Command and Control Idea Sheet and hear advice from subject matter experts.

SAFER Guides Employers as U.S. Ponders Reopening

SAFER: Safe Actions for Employee Returns is a multifaceted, comprehensive effort aimed at helping employers prioritize safety as they return employees to
At the center of SAFER is a task force – comprised of large and small Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, legal experts, public health professionals, medical professionals and government agency representatives – that makes recommendations based on best practices and proven workplace safety strategies. The task force delivers resources, such as guidebooks and checklists, to equip employers with the tools they need to protect workers during this time of uncertainty.

The National Safety Council (NSC) urged the Department of Labor to adopt the SAFER framework as part of its Opening America’s Workplaces Again national online dialogue. Anyone interested in assisting in this effort can email safer@nsc.org.

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**Rethinking Urban Planning in a Post-COVID World**
*by Mary Haverland, Technical Executive, Planning and Mobility, WSP in Australia*

"The pandemic sharply disrupted our everyday lives—how we work, study, shop, hang out, and play. As we emerge from the shutdown and move into recovery, we are questioning which changes will “snap back” to how they were before, and which trends will linger and shape a different future for our built environment.

In Australia and New Zealand, we have long derided our suburban sprawl and sought a more compact, higher density, urban form. But just as previous health events contributed to the rise of the Garden Suburb movement over a century ago, this pandemic has left many of us cherishing our suburban space—back gardens with veggie patches and trampolines, the new status symbols of envy. Coffee from the rediscovered neighborhood milk bar and cycle ride around the local park are strangely satisfying experiences.

The 30-minute city policies are starting to make sense. We had spoken in theory of retiming, remoding, rerouting, or reconsidering our peak hour journeys—but it all seemed too difficult in practice. Now, the realized flexibility of skipping the daily commute or spending more time with family/friends/flatmates is hard to let go of. The yearning desire for air, fresh air, free from bushfire smoke or unseen pollutants, reinvigorates our commitment to living in a cleaner environment.

As planning professionals, we will support measures that reactivate our public places and local economies. Whilst we hope social isolation practices can quickly fade, we expect design resilience to future events will be highly valued. And we anticipate the desire for polycentric transit-orientated city forms that feel spacious but are also sustainable and locally vibrant, with healthy streets and travel choices for all, will remain central to our urban vision."

Click [here](#) to read more about emerging trends and design more safe, sustainable, and resilient spaces.

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**Is it Possible to ‘Pandemic Proof’ Your HVAC Systems?**
*Provided by Hanson Professional Services Inc.*

The short answer to this question is “no!” There are too many variables to uncover — the infectious dose of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is still unknown — or consider, such as the various modes of virus transmission. However, as our industry recovers from the effects of
COVID-19, we highly recommend preparing ourselves, our systems, and our buildings for the next epidemic. The first step for heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems is preparing a building readiness plan by reviewing the systems and equipment to mitigate the transmission of pathogens.

The World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health authorities believe COVID-19 is mainly transmitted by short-range large droplets. The CDC states that transmission by aerosols (droplet nuclei) is uncertain and airborne transmission is unlikely, but the WHO states that airborne transmission might be possible. The current research offers mixed results regarding airborne transmission. ASHRAE’s position indicates that to control the impact of this virus, “transmission of SARS-CoV-2 through the air is sufficiently likely that airborne exposure to the virus should be controlled.” The risk of airborne or aerosol transmission can be reduced by HVAC systems by reducing the airborne concentration, such as through increased ventilation and air management, filtration, and air cleaning.

Conducting an HVAC risk assessment to create an HVAC systems operational plan will help mitigate virus transmission, monitor systems’ performance [...]

To read the full article on Hanson's blog, click here.