The health and safety of employees is the number one priority for construction and materials companies. The measures outlined in many of the guidelines issued during the pandemic were things that construction and materials companies are already doing. As a result, the industry is one of the essential sectors with the ability to operate relatively safely during the health crisis.

During COVID-19, existing safety policies and practices have been enhanced to incorporate special protocols designed to protect employees and the public and to maintain compliance with new health regulations and guidelines. Companies also continuously assess hazards and apply strategies as needed to reduce risk.
Hard hats, safety vests, gloves, and respiratory controls and protections are mandated.

Face masks or respirators required for many tasks and worksites.

Tight regulatory controls to ensure respiratory protection and control of dust (silica) for both mining and construction - screening, monitoring, and protective equipment; specific exposure and actions levels and exposure control plans to minimize exposures of airborne contaminates.

Workers are empowered to develop safe work areas and plans as well as to identify and report safety concerns.

New employee hires typically are required to complete 24 hours of extensive safety and health training within the first 90 days of employment.

All miners are required to receive a minimum of 8 hours of refresher safety training annually. Most mining operations provide double or triple that amount of training.

Companies routinely have daily pre-shift safety talks (tail gates).

All areas where work will be performed must be examined (inspected) prior to the start of the shift or before work can begin.

There is also worksite specific training (required for anyone on a mine site).

All contractors, vendors and visitors (including company employees who do not work at that particular mining operation) are required to receive site-specific hazard awareness training prior to entering the mine.

Safe job procedures are developed and implemented based on each job/task analysis.

All employees are required to complete task training specific to the equipment they will operate or task they will perform.

Ongoing safety performance is tracked, measured and reported.
SAFETY MEASURES ADDED TO EXPAND PROTECTIONS DURING PANDEMIC

A compilation of best practices, added safety measures and policies undertaken during COVID-19 by CalCIMA member companies is available at calcima.org. A few examples are listed below:

- Face masks and physical-distancing required for all employees in all areas.
- Cleaning/sanitizing workstations and equipment between shifts.
- Employees, contractors and customers are educated and informed regarding how to recognize symptoms of the virus and preventive measures to use.
- Screening employees (and subcontractors) and visitors for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Notices/posters at entry points advising employees and visitors not to enter if they have pandemic-related disease symptoms. Also, encouraging staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at entrances and in other workplace areas.
- No-travel and work-from-home policies were also adopted early on in most companies and are now in place across the board for non-essential and administrative workers.
- Extensive sanitization measures employed in the office, plant facilities and vehicles, including for heavy equipment.
- Physical distancing and/or video conferencing for daily pre-shift safety talks (tail gates).
- Online conferencing platforms replaced in-person meetings.
- Clean surfaces of construction equipment (pavers, end loader, rollers, cranes, etc.) and service/fleet vehicles (including steering wheel, gear shift, instrument panels, etc.) at beginning and end of shifts, or between users. Use aerosol sanitizers inside closed cabs.
- Some companies are limiting equipment use to one worker per piece of equipment per day. Others are no longer allow carpooling.
- Some employers have implemented daily temperature checks, symptom checklists and instructions for employees to stay home if they or a family member is feeling sick.
- Posters, flyers and electronic messages to inform and reinforce the importance of measures to stop the spread of the virus.
- COVID-19 Exposure Prevention, Preparedness and Response Plans in place.
There are multiple agencies that have provided frequent updates and directives during the pandemic as well as ongoing guidance to emphasize certain mining or construction hazards or trends, alerts on hazards, reminders on safe practices, and extensive analysis on actual accidents. Many of these same agencies also require regularly scheduled and mandated inspections (3x/yr. for mines; 6x/yr. for tunnel construction) as well as for hazard or complaint driven inspections.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- California Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CalOSHA)
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
- California Department of Water Resources – Safety of Dams Division/Inspectors
- Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)
- Department of Transportation/Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (DOT/FMCSA)
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATFE)