

Coronavirus won't stop highway construction in New Hampshire

NHDOT says it's 'open for business' as work guidelines for crews are enacted

April 8, 2020 [Michael Kitch](#)



While much of New Hampshire will remain idling for at least another month, the construction industry is revving up for another season of roadwork.

“The Department of Transportation is open for business,” said Eileen Meaney, spokesperson for the department. “We are mindful of the Covid-19 pandemic, but at this time projects are moving forward.” She added that the department has not faced a situation like this before and is prepared to be flexible as circumstances may change from day to day.

Gary Abbott of the Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire said that contractors had a conference call with Gov. Chris Sununu and are prepared for a full season of work. He said there are some contracts still outstanding and contractors are calling back seasonal employees and looking for new hires. He stressed that firms have apprised themselves of the protocols and guidance for managing the virus prescribed the Center for Disease Control.

“They are taking all necessary steps to protect their employees,” he said.

The Department of Transportation has issued guidelines and procedures specifying measures to be taken at all job sites to safeguard the health of workers and contain the spread of the virus. Workers with a fever, cough or shortness of breath must report to their supervisor and leave the job site immediately.

Employees with these symptoms or who have had contact with someone diagnosed with or tested positive for Covid-19 should stay at home and not return to the job site until cleared by a medical professional or self-isolated for a prescribed period.

Likewise, the DOT has recommended a long list of procedures to be followed at job sites to ensure social distancing among individuals and to clean and disinfect all potential sources of contamination regularly.

The DOT has scheduled to resurface or rehabilitate 585 miles of pavement this spring and summer, including 20 miles of turnpike. Of the remaining 565 miles, 25 miles are slated for rehabilitation and the remaining 540 miles for resurfacing. The work includes 81 miles of interstate and divided highway, 179 miles of statewide corridor, 183 miles of regional connectors, and 97 miles of local roads.

Among the major paving projects are: 16 miles of I-93 from the Route 9 bridge to Exit 17, including ramps at Exits 14, 15, 16; nine miles of I-93 between Concord and Canterbury; 12 miles of I-393 in Concord; 13 miles of Route 101 between Epping and Exeter; 14 miles of I-89 between Hopkinson and Warner; and 10 miles of I-293 in Manchester from I-93 to the Merrimack River Bridge.

Work to widen and improve I-93 will continue, with major projects around Exit 4 in Londonderry, along three miles between Exit 5 and I-293 and from Exit 1 in Salem to the Massachusetts line. And six bridges over the Route 1 Bypass in Portsmouth are in the process of being replaced.

Municipal public works departments have also begun work.

In Laconia, Wes Anderson, director of public works, said “we’re busy as crazy.”

During the past three years the city has invested \$5 million in street repairs and this year is reconstructing part of one major thoroughfare and finishing resurfacing another as well as replacing a bridge, rehabilitating one street and paving others. Anderson said that crews are working to the protocols and guidance of federal and state health officials, but noted “we only control them while they’re at work.”

Laconia City Manager Scott Myers said that the rehabilitation of the bridge that carries NH Route 3 over the railway at The Weirs, stalled when elements manufactured in Vermont, where construction has not been designated an essential industry, could not be shipped to the city.