According to panelists in the Associated General Contractors of New York State webinar last week, it’s not just the coronavirus that poses a threat to the construction industry. Another factor impacting general contractors is a lack of available specialty contractors, which could be devastating to the industry.

Employees at some specialty firms have been exposed to COVID-19, which has led to the temporary quarantining, while other small family-run subcontractors are even more vulnerable where if one person gets sick it can affect the whole team. At this time it is now more important than ever to stress health and safety practices for workers.

“It is important for construction company leaders to realize that they are responsible for making sure that construction sites are safe and do not constitute a zone for infection,’’ said Becker Shareholder Steven Lesser, chair of the Firm’s construction law practice. “They can do this in several ways, including carefully scheduling trades to avoid having more people on site at one time than is necessary.”

Additional advice for construction company leaders includes being transparent with their employees, subs and suppliers about job site safety, having safety representatives and medical personnel available to check on contractor’s health, and to consider cashless transactions such as electronic payments. These new procedures could make a big impact on preventing the spread of disease.

“They need to maintain strict standards so workforces will actually come to work if they are permitted to do so,” Lesser said.