



Fact Sheet – Interim COVID-19 Guidance from CDC and the U.S. Department of Labor For Agricultural Employers and Workers June 2020

On June 1, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) issued joint [interim COVID-19 guidance for agricultural workers and employers](#). The guidance outlines a COVID-19 assessment and control plan for employers to prevent and address COVID-19 among agricultural workers. This guidance, while jointly developed with DOL, is not mandatory. A summary of the guidance is below.

COVID-19 Assessment and Control Plan

Employers should develop a COVID-19 assessment and control plan, in accordance with [CDC Interim Business Guidance for Businesses and Employees](#). The plan should reflect the specific region, work site, job tasks, and operations of the farm. Employers should designate a qualified workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 assessment and planning, as well as information sharing. The coordinator should be able to communicate with workers in their preferred language. Workers should know how to contact the workplace coordinator with any COVID-19 concerns and should be provided with information about where to get tested. The workplace coordinator should handle any concerns raised by a worker confidentially.

Screening and Monitoring Workers

Employers should consider conducting screenings of workers prior to entering the work site and/or before boarding shared transportation. Screenings include temperature checks at the start of each shift and asking workers if they had a fever and/or COVID-19 symptoms in the past 24 hours. Symptoms to monitor include: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. Employers should not let workers into the worksite if they have a fever of 100.4°F or greater. To limit exposure, the temperature screener should wear proper protective equipment (gloves, gown, face shield, and face mask) and stand 6 feet away.

If a worker has a high fever and/or is experiencing symptoms, employers should encourage the worker to report the symptoms immediately, self-isolate, and contact a health care provider. Employers should provide access to direct medical care. When a worker experiences any of the COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive with COVID-19, the employer should:

- Have the worker isolate him/herself. If he/she cannot isolate in their existing housing arrangements, there should be alternative housing away from the other workers during the quarantine period.
- Inform other workers, especially those who were in close, sustained proximity to the confirmed worker about their possible exposure to COVID-19. It's important that the employer protects the worker's confidentiality, as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). The employer should also clean and disinfect the worker's work area, break areas, bathrooms, vehicles, equipment and tools, in addition to following the recommended sanitation protocols (detailed in the following section).
- Clean and disinfect the living areas, kitchen and dining areas, bathrooms, and laundry facilities if the worker lives in employer housing.
- Work with state, tribal, territorial health officials to limit the exposure to other workers.

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sanitation

To help limit the spread of COVID-19, employers should install (if possible) touch-free time clocks, automatic doors, and rearrange chairs and tables in break rooms to support social distancing. Employers should develop sanitation protocols for daily sanitation of work sites, tools, equipment, and vehicles. They should conduct frequent cleaning and disinfecting of break areas, bathrooms, vending machines, railings, door handles, and locker rooms. If possible, workers should not share tools and tools should be cleaned and disinfected between each use. If frequent cleaning and disinfecting is not possible, then workers may need to wear gloves.

Workers are encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. They must have access to permanent or temporary handwashing facilities with soap, potable water, and clean, single-use towels, in accordance with [OSHA's Field Sanitation Standard](#). There should also be multiple handwashing stations to minimize distance and crowding at the stations.

Physical Distancing

Employers are encouraged to allow for a 6-foot distance between workers and to install plastic shields or barriers when physical distancing is not possible. To further promote physical distancing, employers are encouraged to reduce crew sizes, place workers in alternate rows, and stagger work shifts, meal times, and break times. Employers should consider grouping workers into cohorts who work, travel, and live together to minimize the number of workers who come into close contact with each other.

Face Coverings

Employers should provide readily available clean cloth face coverings for workers to use when the coverings become wet, soiled, or otherwise visibly contaminated during the work shift. CDC recommends that face coverings:

- Fit the nose and mouth
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Do not lead to heat-related illness
- Can be washed and dried daily

- Are replaced with clean placements provided by the employer, as needed

CDC emphasizes that cloth face coverings are not personal protective equipment.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Farmworkers who are in frequent or close contact with workers who may have COVID-19 are deemed at medium risk exposure, based on CDC guidance. As such, they are not required to use respirators for infection control. N95 masks and other filtering respirators may be used voluntarily if workers wish to provide it themselves. Employers who allow voluntary use of respirators should ensure compliance with the voluntary use provisions of the [OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard](#). The availability of water and frequency of breaks should be adjusted to prevent risk of heat-related illness.

Workers who clean or disinfect equipment may need PPE. They should wear gloves selected based on the information provided in the Safety Data Sheet for the sanitizer or disinfecting agent. Employers should provide appropriate PPE training to ensure proper use and disposal.

Training

Information on COVID-19 should be easy to read and in the preferred languages of the workers. It should be placed at the entrance to the workplace, break areas, employer housing, and other areas where it is likely to be seen by workers. The COVID-19 information to be displayed includes:

- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (including how it spreads and how workers can protect themselves)
- Proper handwashing practices and use of hand sanitizer stations
- Farm-specific social distancing practices
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Routine infection control precautions (use of masks and gloves and social distancing measures)
- Steps to take if they get sick
- Employer policies (such as disinfection protocols, housing and worker isolation, and sick leave policies)

Housing

Workers should be provided with disposable gloves, soap for handwashing, and household cleaners. Each room within the housing should have good air flow by using an air conditioner or opening windows. Workers should be social distancing within the house and not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils. Other safety precautions that should be taken include:

- Sleeping arrangements with beds that are placed head-to-toe and are six feet apart
- Adding physical barriers when beds cannot be 6 feet apart
- Avoiding the use of bunk beds
- Encouraging meetings and gatherings outside
- Encouraging residents to wear cloth face coverings in shared spaces

Employers are encouraged to establish isolation plans to respond to workers with COVID-19, including the provision of separate housing for sick or exposed workers. Separate food and bathroom access should be provided and access to non-essential persons should be restricted. Employers should consider designating a low-risk individual to assist ill workers with appropriate PPE to protect that person from exposure.

Transportation

When workers are being transported to the worksite, those who share living quarters should be transported together. Other safety precautions that should be taken include:

- Providing as much space as possible between riders
- Increasing the number of vehicles and the frequency of trips
- Providing hand sanitizer before entering and exiting the vehicle
- Encouraging passengers and drivers to wear face coverings when in the vehicle

Children

Workers are advised to leave their children at home or send their children to childcare, if possible. Employers should be enforcing policies that restrict children's ability to come to the worksite and should follow appropriate child labor laws.

Farmworker Justice will continue to monitor federal and state COVID-19 guidance and regulations for agricultural employers and workers. Visit our COVID-19 page at www.farmworkerjustice.org/covid-19 for the latest developments and available resources for workers and farmworker-serving organizations.