

COVID-19 Infection Prevention for Agricultural Employers and Employees

This document contains recommendations for agricultural employers on how to update their Injury and Illness Prevention Program to include preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. Because COVID-19 is widespread in the community, most workplaces must consider the disease a workplace hazard.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING ON COVID-19

Agricultural employers should provide training in a way that is readily understandable by all employees. Employees should be trained on the following topics:

Information related to COVID-19 from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, including:

- ◆ What COVID-19 is and **how it is spread**.
- ◆ **Preventing the spread of COVID-19** if you are sick.
- ◆ **Symptoms of COVID-19** and when to seek medical attention.

Information from the **UMASH COVID-19 Resource Webpage** for additional resources, including ones in Spanish.

The importance of frequent hand-washing with soap and water, including:

- ◆ Following CDC guidelines to wash for at least 20 seconds.
- ◆ When employees arrive at work and before they leave work.
- ◆ Before and after eating or using the toilet.
- ◆ After close interaction with other persons.
- ◆ After contacting shared surfaces or tools.
- ◆ Before and after wearing masks or gloves.
- ◆ After blowing your nose or sneezing.

Information from the following:

- ◆ Hand sanitizer is not as effective as handwashing but can be used if a hand-washing station is not immediately available.
- ◆ Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ◆ Coughing and sneezing etiquette, including covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue or a sleeve instead of a hand.

Safely using cleaners and disinfectants on surfaces and objects, which includes:

- ◆ Carefully following label directions.
- ◆ Assessing the hazards of all cleaners and disinfectants used at the worksite.
- ◆ Wearing personal protective equipment (such as gloves).
- ◆ Ensuring cleaners and disinfectants are used in a manner that does not endanger employees.

Limiting close contact with others as much as possible and maintaining safe physical distancing.

- ◆ The importance of not coming to work if they have a dry cough, fever, or difficulty breathing, or if they live with or have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- ◆ The employer's plan and procedures to protect employees from COVID-19 illness.

PROCEDURES TO HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 AT THE WORKSITE:

Agricultural employers should establish and implement the following procedures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- ◆ Recommend workers to wear **face cloth coverings** to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among workers.
- ◆ Immediately send employees with acute respiratory illness symptoms home or to medical care as needed.
- ◆ Advise sick or COVID-19 positive workers to limit contact with animals. Establish protocols to help cover animal handling and care shifts.
- ◆ Establish procedures to notify local health officials of COVID-19 infections.
- ◆ Encourage sick workers, who might otherwise work out of economic necessity, to stay home by not punishing them for missing work.
- ◆ If symptoms, illness, or caring for an ill family member prevents them from working.
Learn more at:
MNOSHA COMPLIANCE: NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
- ◆ Make hand-washing stations more readily available and encourage their use.

Establish procedures to routinely clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects (e.g., water containers, steering wheels, shared tools, shared work stations, door handles, seat belts, insides of toilet facilities) throughout the workday. These procedures should include:

- ◆ Using products that are **EPA-approved** for use against the virus that causes COVID-19.
- ◆ Providing EPA-registered disposable wipes for employees to wipe down commonly used surfaces before use.
- ◆ Following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., safety requirements, protective equipment, concentration, contact time).
- ◆ Ensuring there are adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.

PROCEDURES TO INCREASE SOCIAL DISTANCING ON FARMS:

Social distancing is an infection control measure that can stop or slow down the spread of an infectious disease by limiting contact between people. Safe social distancing means maintaining a distance of at least six feet from other people. Agricultural employers should use the following social distancing measures to stop or slow down the spread of COVID-19:

- ◆ Social distancing should be practiced, whether outdoors, in vehicles, or in structures.
- ◆ Establish work practices and work stations, and adjust line speed and other processes to enable employees to maintain safe social distancing while working.
- ◆ Stagger break and lunch times.
- ◆ Limit crew size by staggering work shifts or increasing the number of work shifts.
- ◆ Provide additional seating and shade structures to allow employees to take breaks while staying at least six feet apart.
- ◆ Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours. Employers who house workers are encouraged to be proactive in making social distancing possible for those exhibiting and not exhibiting symptoms.
- ◆ Establish procedures around pick-up and drop-off times or locations to minimize the movement of vehicles on and off the farm and the number of interactions between individuals.

OTHER GENERAL GOOD SANITATION PRACTICES:

Agricultural employers must ensure bathrooms and hand-washing facilities are readily accessible to all employees at all times:

- ◆ Restrooms must be clean and sanitary.
- ◆ Hand-washing facilities must be located at or near the restrooms.
- ◆ Soap or other suitable cleansing agent and single-use towels must be provided.
- ◆ Additional hand-washing supplies should be placed as close to work areas as possible to allow for frequent hand-washing.
- ◆ Enough time must be allowed for frequent hand-washing.
- ◆ Due to increased hand-washing, the employer should frequently check the supply of soap, paper towels, and toilet paper, and replenish them before they run out.
- ◆ Continue to practice safe animal handling practices. Workers who are sick should limit their interaction with animals.

Respirators should be used and made available when required to protect workers from hazards such as with certain pesticides, dusts and solvents.

Workers should be trained and fit tested to use respirators, how to check for structural and functional integrity, and if a successful seal can be maintained before use.

For further information on respirator use and COVID-19 visit [UMASH Respiratory toolkit](#).

ADDITIONAL COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS:

- ⇒ [UMASH COVID-19 Resource Page](http://umash.umn.edu/covid-19-resources)
<http://umash.umn.edu/covid-19-resources>
- ⇒ [Minnesota Board of Animal Health](https://www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19)
<https://www.bah.state.mn.us/covid-19>
- ⇒ [Minnesota Department of Agriculture](https://www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture)
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture>