



NCAE Advisory for Ag Worker Protection during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Agricultural employers recognize that safe and healthy employees are imperative to the success of their operations. They also understand that consumers demand delivery of safe, wholesome and nutritious foods. Consequently, agricultural employers have for years adhered to strict policies assuring the health, hygiene and safety of their employees. Out of an abundance of caution, employers should remind employees of the following practices to ensure the employees' health and safety.

Hygiene

- Employees must avoid the sharing of personal items with one another including food, dishes, cups and gloves.
- Employees should also avoid participating in activities with one another likely to bring them into close proximity.
- Employees should always cover their coughs and sneezes by covering their mouth and nose with a tissue or using the inside of their elbow.
- Employees should dispose of used tissues in the trash and immediately wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hands may be cleaned with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Employees should wash and sanitize their hands several times a day with soap and water for at least 20 seconds including before and after work, breaks, eating, or using toilet facilities. If soap and water are not readily available, hands may be cleaned with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Employers should have soap or disinfectant, potable water, single-use disposable towels or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol throughout operations.

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- Employees should maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet from other coworkers whenever possible (social distancing).
- Meetings and group gatherings should be limited to communicating essential information and such meetings, if possible, should be limited to no more than 10 persons.
- Personal contact and grouping within operations should be limited as should the utility of common facilities at any one time.
- Social distancing should be practiced to avoid spreading illness during work activities and breaks.
- CDC guidelines on workplace health and hygiene should be followed as those guidelines continue to evolve, including the voluntary use of face masks, bandanas or other forms of face protection.

Employees Who Are Ill

- For the safety of themselves and their workforce, employers do not want sick employees on the job.
- Employees are prohibited from coming to work if they are ill.
- Employees that arrive at work presenting symptoms of illness or who appear to develop symptoms of illness while at work, should be sent home immediately.
- Employers should observe work crews when they arrive at the operation to work.
 - If an employee reports illness, advise the employee to immediately contact their medical provider by phone before going to the medical office, clinic or emergency room. An employee may also be advised to contact a tele-doctor.
- If an employee should test positive for COVID-19, the employer should immediately collect certain information and immediately take action to protect other employees and customers and to ensure transparent internal and external communication.
 - Document the employee's work location, their work hours and their general and specific work duties.
 - If the employee has traveled to multiple worksites recently, document the timing of the travel and the last day the employee was at work.
 - Identify and document any other individuals with whom the employee has had contact.
 - If you cannot determine whether the employee's attending physician has contacted the public health department, and if the employer has not been contacted by public health authorities, call public the public health department immediately.
 - In order to maintain the employee's privacy, do not disclose the employee's name unless asked to by the public health department.

- Public health authorities will provide recommendations regarding next steps in terms of identifying employees and will advise regarding further protective measures.
- An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 must explicitly follow the direction and guidance of public health authorities regarding specific quarantine and isolation requirements.

Perform Routine Environmental Cleaning in High traffic Areas of the Operation

- Sanitize work areas throughout the workday.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces according to CDC disinfecting protocols to include:
 - Administrative, shipping and processing facilities, and other enclosed areas where people work throughout the day.
 - Frequently touched or handled locations including door handles, bath and restroom areas, lunchroom tables and chairs, kitchen areas, shared space and facilities, time clock areas, shared computers or tools, any vehicles used in the operations, and any other shared equipment
- Off work-hour times should be used to complete an aggressive sanitation of common areas each day.
 - Use sanitizer and or disinfectant spray each day to deep clean lunch room areas, meeting rooms, time clock areas, office rooms, shipping facilities and all other common areas and facilities.
- All bathrooms (portable and in place) should always be adequately stocked and serviced regularly and disinfected as appropriate.
- Always consider social distancing recommendations when transporting employees and regularly sanitize worker transportation.

Training & Changes to Processes

- Train all employees to follow these standard operating procedures.
- Provide training on COVID-19 preventions using resources from the CDC and local health departments.
- Train employees on appropriate handwashing, hygiene practices, and sanitation procedures.
- Materials should be available in English and Spanish.
- When feasible, encourage appropriate spacing of workers while harvesting and processing to expand distance between employees.
- Be responsive to the personal needs of each employee.

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- Be aware of particular populations at risk such as those over age 60 and those with underlying health issues
- Understand which employees this may apply to and consider whether there are alternative work options or if their current job might be modified to ensure precautions are in place to protect their unique health needs.
- Be responsive to state or federal guidance and respect employee decisions related to that guidance.
- Space work and processing tables accordingly to increase social distancing, when possible.
- Encourage activities such as pre-assembly of cartons and pre-bagging when possible.
- Identify key processes and products and immediately cross-train employees in backup positions to be prepared when people must stay home.

Limit Non-Essential Visits and Travel

- Limit visitors to those necessary for the operation.
- To limit exposure of employees, emphasize on-line ordering for any direct to consumer sales with outside pick-up or delivery options.
- Visitors must be approved before arriving, and employees should maintain social distancing (six feet away) from any visitor.
- Encourage employees to be safe outside of work as well as all CDC recommendations.
- Eliminate all non-essential and non-related services, such as entertainment activities.
- For additional information visit www.cdc.gov

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