



Farmworkers and the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) TEMPORARY WORKER HOUSING COVID-19 GUIDANCE

PREPARE. EDUCATE. PREVENT. ISOLATE. COMMUNICATE.

Employers and employees can help to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This guidance will help Maryland agricultural employers know how to prevent COVID-19, and what to do if there is an outbreak. The most important prevention measure is good communication, presented so that everyone understands how to prevent disease. This means that all communications with workers should be in their native language. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has downloadable signs and guidance available in several languages.

PREPARE - Have a plan and be prepared

- Have a plan in case workers get sick. This should include knowing how sick workers will be isolated to prevent exposing other healthy workers.
 - Know how you will provide food, water, transportation, and supplies if workers are quarantined. You should also have a communication plan.
 - If you do not have enough space on the farm to isolate sick workers or quarantine exposed workers, contact your local health department for their assistance in determining alternate housing arrangements. Staff at the local health department should also be able to answer any other questions or concerns you have about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
 - Maintain a list of emergency contacts for workers.
 - Identify the nearest healthcare facility that provides free or low-cost care to uninsured people.
 - If possible, have your H2A workers enroll in health insurance plans when they first arrive.
 - Plan how and by whom transportation will be provided to workers that need medical evaluation or treatment that protects both the worker and the person providing the transport.
 - If you have separate housing available that has not been certified, contact Maryland DLLR at 410-230-6100.
- Develop a regular cleaning and disinfecting schedule for farmworker housing (including kitchen, dining, and bathroom facilities), transportation vehicles, and other commonly used indoor and outdoor areas. Determine who will be responsible for cleaning/disinfecting and follow-up to confirm it is completed.
- Provide cleaning/disinfectant supplies, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, running water, soap, paper towels, tissues, gloves and masks in all housing and work sites. The CDC recommends the use of non-medical masks or cloth-based face coverings. Surgical masks should be reserved for healthcare workers.
- Create a list of important phone numbers such as the local health department, the closest health clinic, Maryland Department of Agriculture, and the Maryland Department of Health.

EDUCATE - Educate yourself, family members and farmworkers

- The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person:
 - Between people in close contact with one another (within six feet).
 - When an infected person coughs or sneezes.
 - When touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.
- The most common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include:
 - Fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.
 - Symptoms may not occur for two to 14 days after initial exposure.

Return to work recommendations:

- Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms but who were not tested and were told to isolate themselves may leave isolation and return to work if:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, AND
 - At least three days (72 hours) without fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications); AND
 - Symptoms have improved.
- Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms who were tested and were told to isolate themselves may discontinue isolation and return to work if:
 - No fever for 3 days (without fever-reducing medicines); AND
 - Symptoms have improved; and EITHER

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- Person receives clearance from a medical provider after two consecutive negative COVID-19 swab tests; OR
- If additional testing is not available, at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- Persons with a positive test for COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may discontinue isolation and return to work no sooner than 10 days after their first positive COVID-19 test, ONLY IF they have had no subsequent illness or symptoms.

PREVENT - The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed

- Screen arriving workers for symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, nausea or vomiting diarrhea.
- Arrange beds in all farmworker housing at least 6 feet apart, if possible.
- Encourage workers to practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet away from other people); to wear masks especially if they can't stay 6 feet apart; and cough and sneeze into an elbow instead of a hand to protect themselves and others from germs.
- Encourage workers to wash their hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Make sure that farmworker housing (including kitchen, dining, and bathroom facilities), transportation vehicles, and other commonly used areas and surfaces are cleaned and disinfected daily or more frequently as needed.
- Open windows and doors to the housing as much as possible to increase air flow.
- Provide worker camps and individual bunkhouses with sufficient and appropriate cleaner and sanitizer to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Encourage social distancing (at least 6 feet apart) from workers at all times, group workers into groups of fewer than 10 people that will share the same housing, bathroom, kitchen, transportation and worksites. Prevent contact between these groups as much as possible.
- Encourage workers to stay 6 feet apart for social or dining activities.
- Prevent workers and visitors from gathering around vehicles, parking areas, housing and high on-farm traffic areas.
- Post handouts about coronavirus prevention and symptoms in English and workers native language in multiple locations around the farm (e.g. housing, kitchen facilities, bathrooms, shop, break areas, porta johns, field sanitation units, outdoor areas etc.). Handouts should use simple language and infographics.
- Consider providing food and other necessary supplies to minimize worker exposure to the virus off the farm.
- Transport farmworkers in ways that allow them to stay at least 6 feet apart even if it means making multiple trips. Disinfect the transportation between trips.

ISOLATE - Separate sick and exposed farmworkers from others

- If an individual is COVID-positive or is exhibiting symptoms, they should be separated from the rest of the farmworkers and put in an isolated area away from others. Separate sleeping, bathroom, and kitchen facilities for symptomatic or COVID-positive farmworkers are recommended per Maryland Department of Health.
- Follow CDC guidance on "Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19".
- If separate housing is not available, contact your local health department or MDH to determine the best way to protect workers and what community resources are available.
- Farmworkers who are sick or showing respiratory symptoms should NOT return to work until they meet the CDC guidelines listed above.

COMMUNICATE - Communication is the key to success

- Seek medical advice if you or your farmworkers develop symptoms.
- Screen your workers for symptoms and talk to your workers daily to determine if anyone is not feeling well, if additional supplies are needed, and to provide updates about COVID-19.
- Contact your local health department before workers arrive and as required to report any suspected or known cases of communicable disease, such as COVID-19. The health department will guide you on your specific situation, including if, when, and how to test farmworkers.
- Create protocols to maintain a written list of full names and accessible phone numbers of employees. This information is critical in case a worker tests positive or is placed in quarantine and will allow required health care provider follow-up, conduct contact tracing and back to work approval.
- Contact Maryland DLLR to report any changes related to migrant farmworker housing.

Additional agricultural specific resources provided by FDA and CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-agricultural-workers.html>

CDC Toolkit and Resources (Multiple Languages)

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/communication-toolkit.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM30162

CDC Print Resources, Signage and Infographics

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>

CDC Agricultural Employer Assessment and Control Checklist

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Agricultural-Employer-checklist.pdf>