

# Iowa Workforce Development and Iowa Department of Public Health Joint Guidance

## **COVID-19 Guidance for Agriculture Employers, Farm Labor Contractors, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers, and Migrant Labor Camp Operators**

Farming is an essential business operation and activity, often supported with the use of migrant and seasonal farm workers. COVID-19 can spread rapidly in settings with many people living in close proximity, including living facilities for migrant farm workers. Agriculture employers and farm labor contractors who provide housing for migrant workers should implement plans to prevent exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19, care for individuals with COVID-19, and prevent community transmission of the disease. Commitment to strong sanitary protocols will decrease operational impacts.

Individuals above the age of 65 and people with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments) have a greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. This could include agricultural workers with lung problems associated with exposure to common hazards and irritants such as smoke, pesticides and fungi found in crops. The following recommendations from Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Department of Public Health are intended to prevent exposure to COVID-19, where possible, and protect the public health of the state.

### **The key components of a prevention plan for migrant farm workers include:**

1. Minimizing the risk for exposure to the virus,
2. Early detection of individuals with symptoms of COVID-19, and
3. Caring for individuals with COVID-19 while ensuring that they do not give the infection to anyone else.

## **PLAN AND BE PREPARED**

### **General Guidelines**

- Wash hands upon arriving at the camp.
- General cleaning and sanitizing of all common areas daily.
- Provide workers with face masks to wear at all times.
- Maintain a closed camp to all outside organizations.

- Provide workers with a list of resources available to them such as Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Department of Education Migrant Education, Proteus, Iowa Legal Aid etc.,
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet when at all possible.
- Limit trips to stores to once a week.
- Sufficient supplies during orientation to avoid sharing of pens, pencils etc.
- Orientation/onboarding events in small groups of 10 or less.

### **Transportation**

When transporting workers, social distancing and safety guidelines should be followed using the following recommendations:

- Temperature taken every morning prior to loading buses.
- Space workers 6 feet apart on all buses and operate transport vehicles at 50% capacity.
- Transport vehicles should be disinfected after each trip.
- Workers should be encouraged to sit in the same seat on each trip.
- Install sanitizing stations at the entrance of the transportation vehicle.
- Only allow workers to carry the necessary items to the worksite.

### **Housing Sleeping Units**

- Beds spaced 6 feet apart when possible;
  - If not possible, place barriers in between workers' beds such as a curtain.
- Position beds so workers sleep head to toe, as possible.
- Launder all bedding at a minimum two times per week.
- All personal items to be stored in containers, dressers or bags separate from other individual belongings.

### **Eating Areas**

- Create a process to ensure effective flow of individuals in eating areas.
- Schedule eating times to minimize the number of workers present in the same area at a given time.
- When possible, make use of outdoor areas to increase the distance between workers.
- Ensure proper hand washing prior to cooking or handling of food.

### **Restrooms/Bathrooms**

- Cleaning of commonly use bathrooms should occur daily.
- Ensure shower heads are spaced 6 feet apart and curtains are used between showers.
- Urinals and toilets spaced 6 feet apart or barriers such as a curtain added for protection.

## Tools

- Assign tools to workers and avoid sharing whenever possible.
- Disinfect tools frequently and anytime they change hands.
- Workers should disinfect tools and equipment before and after using them (this should be part of the daily routine).
- Avoid carrying unnecessary tools on days they are not needed.

## EARLY DETECTION

- If a worker begins displaying symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath:
  - Have the worker stop working immediately and isolate the person from other workers. Individuals with these symptoms should not be working.
- Workers with symptoms of respiratory illness should take a private vehicle to get to the medical provider. If they do not have their own vehicle, please assist with transportation.
- Call healthcare facility before transporting any ill persons for medical attention and use telehealth services where available.
- Housing for Covid-19 symptomatic individuals
  - People with symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath) should be housed in a separate room with a separate bathroom, if possible, from people who are not sick.

## POSITIVE CASES

- Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 should be housed in a separate room or separate location, with a separate bathroom, if possible, from people who are not sick.
- Instruct workers who had close contact with the COVID-19 patient to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 (fever and onset of respiratory symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath) for 14 days. These exposed workers should be separated from non-exposed workers for 14 days (e.g., sleep in a separate room, work in a separate area). If they develop symptoms of COVID-19, contact your local health department. Refer to the [CDC guidance document](#), *What to do if you're sick*, for more information.
- Create a plan for how the agricultural work will get done if there is a large outbreak in the camp and workers are unable to work.

## CDC Print Resources in Languages Other than English

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc&CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronaviruses%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunication%2Ffactsheets.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc&CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronaviruses%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunication%2Ffactsheets.html)