

**Guidelines for Winemaking Operations
In Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus**

**Oregon Wine Production Task Force
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Introduction

The Oregon Wine Production Task Force has developed this document to highlight key guidelines and ideas to consider for operating wine production facilities in response to COVID-19 and to provide a reference to the various guidance documents that are available.

This document was prepared based on information made available by the Oregon Governor’s office, OHA, ODA, OR-OSHA and the CDC as of the date first set forth above. This document is intended to be a resource for developing your own operational rules and procedures. It is not intended to provide or replace legal, financial or operational advice. Additional local laws, regulations and guidelines may apply that are not addressed here. It is strongly recommended that you consult with your advisors and regularly check for updates from the sources relied on herein and other appropriate sources to remain current regarding this ongoing matter. Periodic review of these guidelines will be performed to adapt them as the health risk from COVID-19 increases or decreases, but may not always be up to date with the most current information made available by state, local and other authorities.

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Organizational and Administrative Measures

- Assign a “workplace coordinator” (RECOMMENDED by OR OSHA) to be the key contact for managers, employees and government officials in the event that an employee tests positive for COVID-19. The coordinator should remain up to date on government regulations and guidance.
- Create a written emergency response plan (RECOMMENDED by OR OSHA) on how to respond if a worker tests positive for COVID-19. It should include connecting with the local public health department.
- Establish a confidential process for employees to report personal illness and contact with individuals that have COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, etc...).
- Develop and communicate a policy on [Sick Leave](#) and [FFCRA](#).
- Develop an emergency operational plan for continuing business with a reduced workforce.
 - Cross-train before harvest to prepare for possible diminished workforce in maintenance, lab, and winemaker.
 - Create a clear plan of succession and make sure the transition of responsibility and authority is communicated to the entire staff.
- Educate employees – Conduct frequent trainings on employee and workplace safety. Highlight the importance of following precautions at all times, especially outside of work.
- Post Signs
 - List of [COVID-19 Symptoms](#). Request people with symptoms to stay home
 - Requirement for [Physical Distancing](#) and [Face Coverings](#)
 - [Precautions for COVID-19 Transmission](#), e.g. face covering, washing hands
 - [COVID-19 Risk Awareness](#)
- Ideas to consider:
 - Have office staff work from home to limit the number of people in the workplace.
 - Limit interaction between departments, e.g. tasting room and winery operations.
 - Plan for alternative methods and/or open-air venues to conduct pre-harvest trainings where social distancing is possible.
 - Ask employees to communicate with you about travel plans and develop policies around travel to potential COVID-19 hotspots. [Travel: FAQs and Answers from CDC](#)
 - Create a company document with COVID-19 policies, train all employees on the policies, and have all employees read and sign the policy.
 - For severely diminished workforce scenarios:
 - Create a plan and training for utilizing an outside crew (vineyard crew, crew from another company-owned facility, or a neighbor winery’s crew).
 - Consider sending fruit to another facility.

Employee Infection Prevention Measures

In winery operations, employee safety is the primary consideration. The following are [basic steps](#) that employers can take to reduce the risk of worker exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in the workplace:

Screen & Monitor Workers (RECOMMENDED by CDC)

- Wineries should educate employees on [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and direct employees with COVID-19 symptoms to stay home (education is key to keep the workplace safe).
- Wineries may choose to give employees a thermometer and a daily checklist of symptoms and ask that they self-monitor before coming to work.
- Symptom screening and temperature monitoring may help catch cases early. Screening station guidance can be found in Part 1A of the [Food Processors Toolkit](#).

- If you screen at entry, screen all employees, including management, as well as visitors, contractors and delivery drivers entering the facility.
- Ensure employee providing screening follows precautions such as using face covering plus faceshield as well as social distance.
- If records related to screening are kept, worker privacy and record retention should be considered.

Physical Distancing

Employers should assign a “social distancing manager” to establish, implement, and reinforce social distancing policies. The social distancing manager should also monitor social distancing of employees on break and during meal periods.

- Ideas to consider:
 - Place markings on floor to indicate where to stand on bottling and sorting lines.
 - Use arrows and other markings to control traffic to minimize close contact, including in bathrooms that are large enough for multiple people.

Face Covering Policy

Masks, face coverings, or face shields, are REQUIRED (by Oregon Executive Order) when working within six feet of other workers and at any point when members of the public are present. [Oregon COVID-19 Mask Requirements](#). Wineries should implement a Face Coverings Policy, and [associated training](#), to mitigate the spread of the virus. Businesses must provide face coverings for employees and visitors to the facility.

Potential policy considerations from most to least effective:

- Require face shields AND face masks when working in close contact (within 6 feet).
- Require face masks at all times while working inside & outside.
- Require face masks while working inside but only when working in close contact with someone while outdoors.
- Require face masks when there are two or more occupants in a room.
- Require face masks only when working within close contact.

Hand Hygiene

Reinforce that meticulous hand hygiene is a critical measure for preventing infections. This includes frequent and proper handwashing and/or the use of hand sanitizers.

- Provide handwashing stations or hand sanitizers (60-95% alcohol content) throughout the facility for employees and customers, including in entry areas, meal and break areas, near bathrooms, and production areas.
- Ideas to consider:
 - Add more sinks throughout the facility to facilitate frequent handwashing.
 - Provide each employee with a refillable keychain hand sanitizer bottle.

Meals and Break Time

- If employees are wearing masks, encourage more breaks for water to stay hydrated.
- Stagger breaks and meal periods with cohort groups taking breaks together.
- Provide safe place for meals & breaks.
- Move break areas into well ventilated or outdoor areas.
- Provide individual seating or otherwise socially distant arrangement.
- Sanitize meal areas between employees.
- Employees should minimize bare-hand contact with food through use of utensils. No bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food is permitted in ODA licensed facilities.
- Employees should wear gloves when performing cleaning, sanitizing, or disinfecting.
- Ideas to Consider:

- Space out chairs in break rooms and add outside tents for breaks.
- Place hooks to hang mask at each break station.
- Create systems to indicate when meal/break station has been sanitized; e.g. magnetic dot that is green (for clean) on one side & red (needs cleaning) on the other.
- If meals are provided for employees:
 - The detergents and hot water in dishwashers are effective at removing the virus.
 - Employees should wear gloves when unloading the dishwasher and serving food.
 - Consider providing assigned tableware for each employee.

Operational Measures

Conduct Periodic Hazard Assessments (REQUIRED by OR OSHA)

These assessments should be done whenever there is a change in work processes and periodically to ensure all safety measures are in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is not required to be in writing but documentation of the assessment would be a best practice. You may also wish to schedule an Oregon OSHA [consultation](#).

Optimize Ventilation in Workplace (RECOMMENDED by OR OSHA)

Consult with an HVAC professional to

- Investigate the ability to safely increase the percentage of outdoor air supplied through the HVAC system (requires compatibility with equipment capacity and environmental conditions).
- Work outside whenever possible.
- Investigate increasing filtration efficiency to the highest level compatible with the HVAC system without significant deviation from designed airflow.
- Ideas to consider:
 - Move close contact operations, such as sorting lines, outside or into well-ventilated areas.
 - Open doors & windows.
 - Set ventilation in shared vehicles, to utilize more outside air.
 - Use carbon dioxide ventilation fans to exchange air within the facility.
 - Leave bathroom fans on during the day.

Cleaning & Disinfection of Surfaces

- Use [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) on frequently touched surfaces such as door knobs, alarm keypads, employee time clock, handrails, shared countertops/workstations/lab bench, bathroom surfaces, kitchen surfaces, computers, telephones, forklift controls, etc...
- Always read and follow the directions on the disinfectant label to ensure safe and effective use.
 - Wear skin protection and eye protection for potential splash hazards.
 - Ensure adequate ventilation.
 - Use no more than the amount recommended on the label.
 - Keep surface wet for a period of time (see product label).
 - Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label).
 - Avoid mixing chemical products.
 - Label diluted cleaning solutions.
- Educate employees about the difference between cleaning surfaces to remove dirt & impurities, sanitizing food surfaces to remove wine microbes, and disinfecting surfaces to eliminate SARS-CoV-2. Use only sanitizers approved for food surfaces when sanitizing equipment that will come in contact with juice or wine.
- Restrict use of any shared items or equipment and require disinfection of equipment between uses. Given that some surfaces, such as the outside of hoses, may not be easily disinfected, reinforce handwashing and teach employees not to touch their face.

- Ideas to consider:
 - Develop a [cleaning check list](#) with timing required for various surfaces.
 - Place ethyl alcohol (70% or more by volume) spray bottles around the facility including near doors, on forklifts, and close to other frequently touched surfaces. Instruct employees to spray down surfaces after use.
 - Common sanitizers such as peracetic acid, caustics, and sulfur/citric are not effective disinfectants against SARS-CoV-2 at the concentrations used for equipment sanitization. Consider the following food-safe alternatives if disinfection is the goal:
 - Use dishwasher to sanitize fittings.
 - Steam, quaternary ammonia, and food-safe detergents are effective.
 - While chlorine-based sanitizers are effective, they should not be used in winery cellars due to the risk of chlorophenol and chloroanisole taint issues.

Other operational measures to consider

- Reduce the frequency of paperwork passed between individuals. Oregon Department of Weights and Measures does not require that weigh tags be signed by delivery drivers.
- Consider alternative methods for work orders such as online systems or posting work orders on the wall near where work will take place.
- Assign pumps & hoses to specific employees or cohort groups. Loose fittings can be kept in sanitary buckets that remain with the pump.
- Modify employee schedules to reduce unnecessary close physical contact.
- Use physical barriers or modify workstations, work procedures, or hours and shifts to increase the distance among employees.
 - Sorting lines can be outfitted with plexiglass, clear curtains on a frame, or other barrier built to [OSHA-recommended dimensions \(DRAFT\)](#).
- Add additional clock in/out stations
- Create guidance for shared vehicles including sanitizing surfaces after use, increased ventilation, and policies surrounding carpooling.

Key Guidance Documents

CDC Guidance for Manufacturers

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has provided [guidance](#) for manufacturing facilities.

OSHA Guidance for Preparing Workplaces

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has provided [guidance](#) for employers at the federal level.

OHA Guidance for Employers

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) continues to update their [Oregon General Guidance for Employers on COVID-19](#).

Oregon Food Processing Toolkit & Playbook

The Oregon [Food Processing COVID-19 Prevention Toolkit](#) was developed as a joint effort between Oregon Food Processors and OHA, Oregon Department of Health (ODA), and Oregon OSHA to provide guidance for food processors in developing a plan for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The Oregon [Food Processing COVID-19 Response Playbook](#) was developed to establish the coordination and response efforts of the ODA, Oregon OSHA, and OHA when one or more cases of COVID-19 are identified in a food processing facility.

Winery Operations Guidelines - COVID-19 Checklist

Organizational and Administrative Measures

- Assign a designated “social distancing officer” to establish, implement, and enforce social distancing policies.
- Assign a workplace coordinator to be the key contact for managers, employees, and government officials in the event that an employee tests positive for COVID-19.
- Create a written emergency response plan detailing how to respond if a worker tests positive for COVID-19 (connect with local public health department).
- Develop and communicate a sick leave policy based on FFCRA guidelines.
- Update your company PPE policy include guidance on face coverings to mitigate transmission in the workplace.

Employee Infection Prevention Measures

- Ensure availability of employee/customer hand washing facilities, install hand sanitizers (>60% alcohol).
- Require employees to wear face coverings based on public health authority guidelines and company PPE Policy.
- Plan and implement controls for unavoidable close contact, such as clear dividers or use of face shields in addition to face coverings, on the bottling or sorting line.

Break & Meal Periods

- Encourage more breaks for water to stay hydrated and avoid heat illness.
- Stagger breaks and meal periods with cohort groups taking breaks together.
- Provide well-ventilated or outdoor space for meals and breaks with individual or otherwise socially distant seating.
- Sanitize meal areas between employees; wear gloves when cleaning, sanitizing, or disinfecting.

Education

- Post signs, e.g. 1) [COVID-19 Symptoms, people with symptoms to stay home](#), 2) [Requirement for Face Coverings](#), 3) [Requirement for Physical Distancing](#), 5) [Personal Protection Guidelines](#) and 6) [COVID-19 Risk Awareness](#).
- Reinforce meticulous hand hygiene, avoiding close contact, and avoiding using other employee’s computers, phones, and equipment.
- Provide workers with education and training on: COVID-19 Risk Factors, Physical Distancing Protocols, Operational Measures, Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines, and Illness Management.

Operational Measures

- Establish physical distancing protocols.
- Form consistent cohorts, pairs or groups of employees, to work together when close contact is unavoidable.
- Create alternative methods to reduce the transfer of paperwork between workers.
- Move work outside when possible and increase outdoor air ventilation in indoor spaces.
- Develop a schedule and checklist to routinely clean & disinfect all high frequency touch-points.
- Educate employees on the difference between cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection.
- Reinforce: disinfecting all surfaces in a winery is impossible; instruct employees to wash or sanitize hands often and avoid touching their face.

Personnel Illness Management Guidelines

- Implement a “stay home” policy for employees that are sick or have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Establish a confidential process for employees to report personal illness or contact w/ COVID-19.
- Establish a process for managing employees with potential COVID-19 exposure or infection.
- Establish guidelines for when an employee that has been in “isolation” or “quarantine” may return to work by collaborating with the local public health department.