

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) GUIDANCE FOR MIGRANT FARM WORKERS (MSFW), AND EMPLOYERS IN OREGON

The following recommendations are intended to prevent transmission of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), reduce morbidity and mortality associated with *COVID-19* among MSFW, their families, employers, and the public health of the state. As essential services, food and agriculture will continue to function using all prevention measures provided by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA).

The *COVID-19 disease*, can spread easily in settings where people work and live in close proximity, including residential facilities for migrant farm workers. Farm owners and managers, including those who provide housing for migrant workers should implement plans to prevent transmission of COVID-19 among cohabitating residents and to care for individuals infected with COVID-19 as home isolation and quarantine are essential to preventing further spread of the disease.

Individuals above the age of 65 and people with underlying medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments) are more vulnerable and risk for severe illness including respiratory failure and death. This includes agricultural workers with respiratory conditions associated with exposure to common hazards such as pesticides and fungi found in crops.

The key components of preventing COVID-19 among migrant farm workers include:

- 1) Update your emergency operations plan
- 2) Minimizing the risk of exposure to *COVID-19*
- 3) Early detection of workers with symptoms of *COVID-19*
- 4) Promote the practice of everyday preventative actions
- 5) Adhere to social distancing recommendations
- 6) Proper care for individuals with *COVID-19* including home isolation
- 7) Identifying healthcare facilities that provides free or low-cost care
- 8) MSFWs have the right to a safe work environment, the employer must follow workplace health and safety rules as per OR-OSHA and BOLI.
- 9) Stay informed about local *COVID-19* information and updates



Plan and Prepare

Implement daily safety huddles and ongoing communication with your team: **Promote Healthy Habits - Prevent the Spread of COVID-19.**

Business Work-Flow

- Limit number of employees to 10 per working area.
- Workers to maintain social distancing always, including lunchtime and breaks.
- Put your emergency operations and communication plans into action.
- Emphasize everyday preventative actions through intensified communications with employees and visitors to your business.

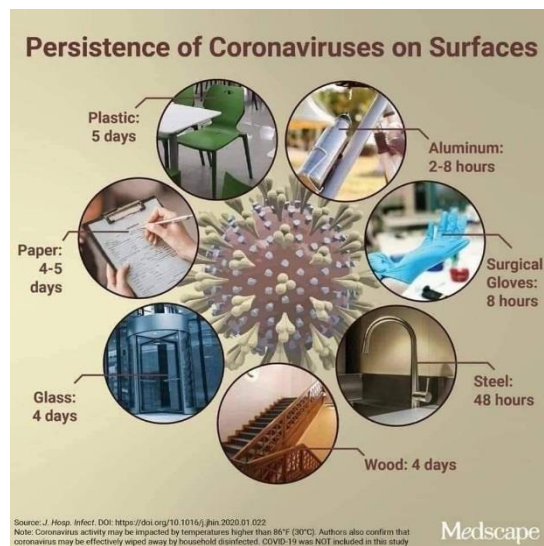
Educate workers about hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

- Provide signs in English and Spanish with information about washing hands after coughing, sneezing, restroom use, before eating; avoiding touching face, eyes, nose, or mouth; and other tips for protecting yourself and others from germs.
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>
- The CDC has educational materials available in both English and Spanish.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- The Pan-American Health Organization has additional educational materials in Spanish only. <https://www.paho.org/es>
- The Mixteco/Indegen Community Organizing Project (MICOP) has information in Indigenous language. <http://mixteco.org/>

Provide supplies to prevent COVID-19, like soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and lined trash cans.

- Follow OR-OSHA Administrative Rules- Division 4 Agriculture, Subdivision J, Work Environment (J1, J4, J-7)
- Make sure that workers have access to these supplies at the worksite, in common areas, bathrooms, and where they eat.
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide a disinfectant that is active against *emerging viral pathogens and human coronaviruses* to sanitize counters, bathrooms, and other areas.

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>



Transportation: Talk to the workers about what steps to take when traveling to and from work. MSFW practice carpooling, either by riding with coworkers in private vehicles, or by getting a ride from the labor contractor.

- Private vehicle: Limit the number to two (2) people per vehicle
- Van/bus: maintain the six (6) feet social distance from other riders and driver
- Company vehicle: Limit the number to two (2) people per vehicle
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol
- Cover your cough and sneezes in the bend of your arm or with a tissue then discard
- Do not spit or salivate at anytime
- Worker to cover nose/mouth with bandana while sharing a ride
- Vehicle owner to sanitize door handles and cup holder daily

Returning to residence: Ask incoming workers if they have symptoms of *COVID-19* such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

- If they have any of these symptoms, house them in the area designated for sick people, provide a mask to the worker and instruct to put it on to cover mouth/nose. If mask is not available, provide tissues or a bandana to cover mouth/nose, and arrange for them to call/see a medical provider.
- Employer to activate the company emergency plan.
- Call the medical provider in advance so healthcare workers can take appropriate precautionary measures.
- Workers with symptoms of respiratory illness should take a private vehicle to get to the medical provider and should wear a mask preferable (bandana if mask is not available) for the entire ride and into the health facility. If they do not have their own vehicle, please assist with transportation. Circulate air outside by partially lowering windows (weather permitting).

While at work: If a worker starts having symptoms of *COVID-19* such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath:

- Employer to activate the company emergency plan
- Have the worker stop working immediately and isolate the person from other workers and have the worker wear a mask right away, or bandana if mask is not available. People with these symptoms should not be working.
 - If the room for sick people is not in use, workers with symptoms of *COVID-19* can rest there. Ensure they wear a mask or bandana at all times.
 - If there are people with presumptive *COVID-19* disease in the room, find a different place for people who have respiratory symptoms but have not been tested for *COVID-19* to rest. Ideally, each person would have their own room with a closable door. If not possible, cots/beds should be separated as far apart as possible in a well-ventilated space.
- Call the medical provider in advance so healthcare workers can take appropriate precautionary measures.
- Workers with symptoms of respiratory illness should take a private vehicle to get to the medical provider and should wear a mask preferable (bandana if mask is not available) for the entire ride and into the health facility. If they do not have their own vehicle, please assist with transportation. Circulate air outside by partially lowering windows (weather permitting).

If a worker is diagnosed with *COVID-19*:

- Notify your local health department.
- No infected or exposed farmworker should be allowed or forced to return to work prior to being cleared by their medical provider and/or health department.

Farmers who provide housing and/or H-2A Visa Working Permit

Provide supplies to prevent COVID-19 like soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and lined trash cans.

- Follow OR-OSHA Administrative Rules- Division 4 Agriculture, Subdivision J, Work Environment (J1, J4, J-7)
- Make sure that workers have access to these supplies at the worksite, in common areas, restrooms, where they sleep, and where they eat.
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide a disinfectant that is active against the *emerging viral pathogens and human coronaviruses* to sanitize counters, bathrooms, door knobs, eating surfaces, and other high touch areas. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Determine where you will house workers with symptoms of COVID-19.

- People with symptoms of *COVID-19* (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath) should be housed in a separate room with a separate bathroom from people who are asymptomatic.
- Provide surgical facemasks and store them near the room for people with *COVID-19*. Facemasks should be worn by sick people when they are outside of their room or when other people are in their room, and by people who are taking care of people with *COVID-19*.
- Ventilate the room where persons with *COVID-19* are housed on regular intervals, if possible.
- Post signs encouraging frequent hand washing and hand sanitizing. Make soap, hand sanitizer, and cleaning/disinfecting supplies readily available.

If a worker is diagnosed with COVID-19:

- Employer to activate the company emergency plan and notify your local health department.
- 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. They should have access to a non-touch thermometer to measure their temperature twice per day, once in the morning and afternoon.
- Exposed workers should be separated from non-exposed workers for 14 days (self-quarantine advice). This includes sleeping in a separate room, work in a separate area, and use of different bathroom when possible. If additional workers develop symptoms of *COVID-19*, contact your local health department.
- No infected or exposed farmworker should be allowed or forced to return to work or home prior to being cleared by the health department for travel.

Let workers who have symptoms of respiratory illness rest until they feel better.

- Make sure they have enough food and water as they will not be able to go to the store and may not have any funds to buy their own.
- Monitor for worsening symptoms. About 20% of infected people will need hospitalization.
- If symptoms worsen, please call the local urgent care or emergency department prior to transporting the worker for notification prior to arrival so that the healthcare team can take proper precautions to prevent transmission.
- Public health officials (e.g., local health department staff) will provide further instructions about isolation and release from isolation.
- Create a plan for what to do if many workers are sick at the same time.

Every worker has the right to a safe work environment, the employer must follow work place health and safety rules.

LINKS TO INFORMATION

- **Oregon Health Authority – Coronavirus** - <https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>
- **Oregon Department of Agriculture** - <https://www.oregon.gov/ODA/agriculture/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>
- **OR-OSHA** – [https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf?ct=t\(COVID_20200325\)](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf?ct=t(COVID_20200325))
- **United States Environmental Protection Agency** - <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- **Centers for Disease Control** - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- **Pan-American Health Organization** - <https://www.paho.org/es>
- **OHSU** - <https://www.ohsu.edu/health/coronavirus-resources>
- **Oregon Primary Care Association- Oregon’s Community Health Centers**
<https://www.orpca.org/chc/find-a-chc>
- **National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.** - <http://www.ncfh.org/covid-19.html>

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