

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AS PART OF THE TOOLKIT FOR WINERIES

The purpose of this communications plan is to establish communications protocol among wineries when or if the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Oregon OSHA), and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) report one or more cases of COVID-19 in a winery or vineyard.

A coordinated response will ensure that facilities can continue to operate and protect the public's health, while also having tools to communicate with employees, the media, and their customers, club members and partners.

COVID-19 POSITIVE WITHIN A WINERY AND VINEYARD FACILITY

Oregon Health Authority Response Protocol

Once OHA is aware of a case associated with a facility, it will immediately share a summary of the situation including: case volume, infectious period dates, any facility prevention measures in place, issues of concern associated with the facility, and any other pertinent information. The summary of the situation will be sent to Community.LifeLine@dhsosha.state.or.us.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Response Protocol

Once ODA has knowledge of a confirmed COVID-19 positive case associated with a facility, as the licensing authority, ODA will assign the local safety inspector to coordinate. The ODA inspector will coordinate a plan with Oregon OSHA, OHA and LPHA to complete site assessments. Site assessments may occur in person, over the phone or other virtual means and will result in a report.

Oregon OSHA Response Protocol

Oregon OSHA will be notified by OHA or ODA when there is a positive COVID-19 case associated with a facility. An Oregon OSHA consultant will then be assigned to participate in the facility site assessment in an advisory role to the notifying agency (OHA or ODA). The consultant will conduct a hazard assessment following applicable agency guidelines with a focus on ensuring the employer is abiding by COVID-19 workplace safety requirements. Oregon OSHA's advisory role is not the same as the consultation services the division provides at the request of an employer. Moreover, Oregon OSHA's advisory role and consultation services are both separate and distinct from its enforcement program, which may still be activated if the circumstances warrant it.

COMMUNICATION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are 5 main tenets of communication to remember during an outbreak:

- 1. Trust.** The key principle of outbreak communication is to communicate in ways that build, maintain, or restore trust between the public and outbreak managers. Without this trust, the public will not believe, or act on, the health information that is communicated by health authorities during an outbreak.

2. Announcing early. Proactive communication of a real or potential health risk is crucial in alerting those affected and minimizing an infectious disease threat. Announcing early - even with incomplete information - prevents rumors and misinformation. The longer officials withhold information, the more frightening the information will seem when it is eventually revealed, especially if it is revealed by an outside source. Late announcement will erode trust in the ability of public health authorities to manage the outbreak.

3. Transparency. Maintaining the public's trust throughout an outbreak requires ongoing transparency, including timely and complete information of a real or potential risk and its management. As new developments occur over the course of an outbreak they should be communicated proactively. Transparency should characterize the relationship between the outbreak managers, the public and partners as it promotes improved information gathering, risk assessment and decision-making processes associated with outbreak control.

4. Listening. Understanding the public's risk perceptions, views and concerns is critical to effective communication and the broader emergency management function it supports. Without knowing how people understand and perceive a given risk and what their existing beliefs and practices are, decisions and required behavior changes necessary to protect health may not occur and societal or economic disruption may be more severe.

5. Planning. Public communication during an outbreak represents an enormous challenge for any public health authority and therefore demands sound planning, in advance, to adhere to the principles described above. Planning is an important principle, but more importantly, it must translate into action.

Communication Process

1. Gather information
2. Employees will need to be notified first that an outbreak has occurred so that they can be protected. Choose one person to communicate and who will notify all employees that people have been identified to test positive with COVID-19, but not identified by name. The OHA does not identify #s of people infected, either.

This could be handled best by human resources, or someone inside the company that people are accustomed to seeing emails from on staff announcements. It does not need to be the CEO or winery and vineyard owner.

3. Use this OHA template for communications to employees, available to download ([le2294>Contact Letter](#)) See the [OHA Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication webpage](#) for more resources.
4. If you opt to write your own announcement, make sure you communicate the following info to employees:
 - Date of COVID identification
 - Support in the form of a phone number or email
 - Testing resources on where to go

- Definition of “close contact” to prevent further outbreak. Close contact means being within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes cumulatively.

Employees testing positive must be sent home to quarantine until all three of the following are true:

- At least 72 hours have passed after you last had a fever (without using medicine to reduce your fever); and
- COVID-19 symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea) are getting better; and
- At least 10 days have passed since the first day you got sick or since your first positive test for COVID-19.

If you never had any symptoms, you may leave your home 10 days after your first positive test for COVID-19.

5. The person or people who have contracted COVID will receive a letter from OHA which informs them to stay home except if medical care is needed. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. To the extent possible, avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
6. Once employees are informed, let them know all media inquiries should go to one person at the company. If you have an in-house media relations expert, that is the natural person, however, know that working remotely will cause this person to receive media calls at their home and they need to be prepared with talking points and procedure know how before an outbreak begins.

Media Relations

Before an outbreak occurs, designate a person at the winery or vineyard to speak to media. Know that an outbreak will cause more work for the communications professional and they will likely need to have space to clear their calendar for media requests, press conferences, material production, language/translation support, implicated partners, and non-health reporters more likely to be involved who may need more explanation.

They will need to know this from OHA:

1. When workplace outbreaks reach 20 or more cases, the outbreak is named in the next day's daily press release.
2. Data for the COVID-19 Weekly Report is pulled at 11 p.m. Sunday nights. If a worksite outbreak reaches five cases or more between Sunday and Tuesday morning, it will be reported in the COVID-19 Weekly Report on Wednesday, so that workplaces have at least 24 hours' notice before being named in the report. If a worksite outbreak reaches five cases (but less than 20) after the COVID-19 Weekly Report is published on Wednesday, it will be cited in the following Wednesday's report.
3. You may not release the name of the COVID affected person to the media.

4. From Meagan McLafferty, epidemiologist with OHA: You are welcome to release the number of cases at a winery or vineyard. As a caveat, the figure OHA reports include all individuals associated with an outbreak which may include non-employees such as household members. In addition to not disclosing names to media, you may not disclose names of affected employees to staff or others as well as this is confidential health information.
5. Also from Meagan: If a writer asks whether a COVID-19 impacted worker touching the product (wine bottle, packaging) can infect the customer, the answer is no, through the time and process of handling the infection on the surface area is diminished, and this is not a meaningful amount of transmission of disease for the consumer to be concerned about.

Talking Points for Press

In your own words, draft talking points for media ahead of time. Talking points should be positive and proactive and should include action steps your winery or vineyard are taking. These include:

- a. Rapid communication with staff and quick response and reporting times that your company has taken in trying to stop the spread of COVID-19 in removing the infected person from the workplace.
- b. Measures you have in place to stop the spread of COVID, both in the work areas and in the breakroom. If you are closing operations to clean for 24 hours, then tell the media this. Similarly, if you are disinfecting high-touch surfaces including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, tables, tell the media about these sanitizing measures.
- c. Other measures you can tell press about include installing Plexiglas shields, outdoor lunch areas, meetings conducted virtually, masks required at all times, six feet of social distancing with masks and gloves inside the production facility, winery and outside in the vineyards. Also, temperature checks, and providing resources for questions employees may have.
- d. Cooperation and compliance with OHA, ODA and Oregon OSHA in inspections and employee safety.

Customer Communications

Your customers and partners will want to hear from you and know you are handling the situation swiftly and responsibly. Consider ceasing operations for 24 hours for a deep disinfect of all high touch surfaces and tell your customers of your plan to do so. Consider drafting a letter, email and/or web post on your site about having had an outbreak. Examples of actual verbiage that is meaningful with customers are on the [CDC site with toolkit](#). There are methods on the [Oregon Business site here, too](#).

Additionally:

- Keep the communication lines open and consistent with your customers. Write that you are taking steps to ensure that the spread of the virus never occurs again.
- Acknowledge the importance of uncertainty. At the early stages of an outbreak, there's an uncomfortable amount of uncertainty. Guidelines and advice are likely to be interim and fluid, subject to change as we learn more. Also recognize that people within organizations moving fast as we learn more about the virus and its transmission.
- Your communication should show customers that their patronage of the winery and vineyard is valued.
- It's difficult to predict when things will get "back to normal," which means businesses can't always make promises about their own timelines for reopening and/or ramping up services. However, communicating about how you plan to continue serving customers, while being transparent about any areas of uncertainty, is appreciated.

Additional Communications Resources

Following are [Tools Often Used for Outbreak Responses from the CDC](#):

- *Internet site.* The response effort might need an Internet site to convey relevant and rapidly changing information about the outbreak. The site should be the main repository of scientific facts, data, and resources. All other communications should be based on the content of that site. Key information for the site might include the following:
 - Data or case counts;
 - Maps of the affected area;
 - Guidance for affected populations, the public, travelers to or from the region, and healthcare providers who are caring for the affected people;
 - A section highlighting the newest information; and
 - A multimedia section for the media and the general public.
- *Call center.* The response effort might benefit from having a call center equipped to answer inquiries from the affected population, the worried well, and healthcare providers seeking information. Guidance is available for entities who are establishing a call center during an outbreak response.
- *Social media messages.* Create social media messages from the Internet site content. Communications staff should monitor social media regularly to identify and dispel myths and misperceptions.
- *Clinician outreach resources.* The response might require substantial communications with healthcare providers. Webinars, conference calls with partner organizations, videos for online clinical communities, or other forums might be considered to allow healthcare providers to access up-to-date information, ask questions, and obtain advice from other clinicians associated with the response.
- *Digital press kit for the news media.* A digital press kit with photos, videos, quotations from spokespersons, the latest data or information (e.g., graphics, charts, or maps), and information about how to obtain an interview is always helpful for reporters during an outbreak investigation.
- *Tailor communication resources.* The response might require translation for specific audiences, and communication materials might need to be tailored for reaching affected populations. Some responses use photo novellas, simple line art, text messaging, or community events to convey important information for specific audiences.

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