



Agriculture and Markets

The industry specific guidance below was developed by the Department in response to the pandemic and is no longer mandatory. These archived documents are made available as a public reference and resource only.

Industry partners should refer to [New York Forward Guidance](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19. For more information, please visit <https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus>.

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Operator Checklist for Farms

MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WORKFORCE

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are a fever greater than 100.0°F, sore throat, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include fatigue, muscle aches and pains, and decreased appetite. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person-to-person contact. Individuals who test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19 should not go to work.

DEVELOP A COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

- In accordance to the “Interim Guidance for Prevention and Response of COVID-19 at Farms”, work with the local health department (LHD) to plan for:
 - A large numbers of workers requiring quarantine or isolation.
 - Additional housing, transportation, and essential needs, such as food, medicine, and laundry, to accommodate the maximum number of at-risk workers that could require quarantine and isolation.
 - The screening of all workers for symptoms and transmission risk.
- Identify staff who will be responsible for screening workers and working with LHDs on the response.
 - Before reporting to the worksite, screening must review the worker’s international travel history.
 - Screening must be conducted as workers enter the worksite, in addition to mandatory screening every 12 hours thereafter.
 - Screening should ask workers if they have any COVID-19 related symptoms, such as a cough or shortness of breath, or if they have had exposure to anyone who either tested positive for COVID-19 or had symptoms of COVID-19. Screening should also check if the individual has a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0°F.
- Notify LHDs of protocols for quarantining exposed workers and isolating workers with COVID-19 symptoms. Quarantine/isolation housing should include separate sleeping areas, bathrooms, provisions for meals and other essential needs (such as food, medications, and laundry), as described in “Interim Guidance for Prevention and Response of COVID-19 at Farms”.
- Organize and plan for the medical transport of ill workers to an identified health care facility.
- Require workers to immediately notify their supervisor if they begin to experience COVID-19 symptoms at work.
- Follow the cleaning and disinfection measures and social distancing protocols described in “Interim Guidance for Prevention and Response of COVID-19 at Farms”.
- Provide each worker with “Coronavirus (COVID-19) Tips for Farm Workers”, in their preferred language, and request that they share this information with their families.

- Provide an adequate supply of face coverings for workers to use when interacting with the public and each other, including during transportation. This is especially important when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Assure adequate supply of surgical facemasks or comparable face coverings, if available, for use during periods of quarantine or isolation.

WORKERS POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO A CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

- The following workers should be precautionary quarantined for 14 days when not at work on the farm, even if they are asymptomatic:
 - Workers who in the past 14 days have been in close or proximate contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Workers who in the past 14 days traveled from another country or who were on a cruise ship (including river cruises).
 - Any worker the LHD believes should be quarantined for precautionary reasons.
- Workers may work if they are considered essential to the operations of the farm and:
 - Do not display any symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Remain in quarantine when not at work, either at home or at a location designated by the operator that meets LHD quarantine requirements;
 - Undergo temperature monitoring and symptom checks upon arrival to work and at least every 12 hours while at work, and self-monitor (i.e. take temperature, assess for symptoms) twice a day when not at work;
 - Wear an acceptable face covering while in the presence of any other individual; and
 - Immediately stop work and notify their supervisor if they develop ANY symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If this occurs, the LHD may be consulted on next steps as outlined below.

WORKERS CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED OF COVID-19

- Workers testing positive for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they are displaying symptoms, and workers displaying symptoms of COVID-19, such as a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0°F, cough, or shortness of breath, should be isolated and not permitted to work for at least 10 days.
- The local health department should be contacted for recommended next steps.
- Workers in isolation must:
 - Remain isolated in their own room with the door closed;
 - Use their own bathroom, if possible. If the employer is providing housing for the affected worker(s), please work with your LHD to arrange how to isolate the worker(s) from others;
 - Be monitored by the LHD, as appropriate, until their recovery; and
 - Be provided essential needs such as healthcare, food, medications, and laundry.
- Isolated workers may not report to work until:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms appeared; AND

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed without a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
- Respiratory symptoms including cough and shortness of breath improve.

PROVIDE ISOLATION/QUARANTINE HOUSING PER THESE REQUIREMENTS

- Separate sleeping quarters, with the ability to close the door and separate bathrooms for each individual or family group.
- Provide access to a sink with soap, water, and paper towels.
- Restrict interaction with others outside of a family group.
- Restrict use of shared spaces.
- Provide cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- Food, medicines, and other essential needs must be delivered to the person’s quarters.
- Supply facemasks or comparable face covering for workers.
- Bagged garbage may be left outside the door of each housing quarter for pickup. Special handling is not required.
- Establish a system of temperature and symptom monitoring in the living quarters and provide thermometers for temperature checks.

PROMOTE HOUSING-AREA SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HYGIENE

- All worker housing must provide for adequate social distancing, cleaning and disinfection, and the necessary controls to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
- Work with LHD to screen and assign workers to appropriate housing based on isolation and quarantine status.
- House workers in the smallest groups possible.
- Distance beds at least 6 feet (about 2-meters) apart.
- Increase ventilation in all housing areas, including living and sleeping, cooking and eating, and bathroom and shower areas, by opening doors and windows, if outdoor temperatures are agreeable.
- Implement social distancing measures for common areas, such as scheduling staggered use of shared dining space.

PROMOTE GOOD SANITATION AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Set up and maintain hand washing and equipment sanitizing stations in all common work and housing areas that include soap, water, and paper towels. Hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can also be provided for unsoiled hands, if soap and water is unavailable. Hand sanitizer is not effective on heavily soiled hands.
- Regularly clean and disinfect all common areas in work and housing facilities.
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, handles, water spigots, chairs, benches, tables, and other work surfaces.
 - Clean and disinfect shared equipment, tools, and vehicles.
- Allow time for hand washing throughout the day, including at the beginning, during, and end of a shift, and before and after meal breaks.

- Regularly remind workers to:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after contact with frequently touched surfaces, before preparing food or eating, and after using the restroom.
 - Hand sanitizer is not effective on heavily soiled hands.
 - Cough and sneeze into tissues (or elbows if needed) and dispose of tissues immediately. Wash or sanitize your hands.
 - Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.
 - Sanitize shared vehicles, equipment, and tools between uses. Do not share tools and equipment before sanitizing them.

MAINTAIN A DISTANCE OF 6 FEET (ABOUT 2 METERS) AWAY FROM OTHERS

- Workers must wear face coverings when in public, in cases where social distancing is not possible.
- Those whose job duties permit a separation of greater than 6 feet do not have to wear a face covering if controls are in place to maintain social distancing.
- Monitor and remind workers to maintain a 6 foot distance throughout their shift. This should occur at all locations including fields, orchards, vineyards, or pack houses.
 - Stagger workers over and within rows.
 - Adjust product flow for adequate inspection or sorting, with fewer workers on the line.
- Use a tape measure or measuring stick to demonstrate 6 feet. It is about 3 arms lengths of an adult male.
- Advise workers to avoid direct contact social greetings, such as handshakes, hugs, or fist and elbow bumps, and encourage waves and smiles instead.
- Provide adequate time and space for workers to clock in and out of their shifts while maintaining a safe distance apart.
- Hold meetings and trainings in small groups, so workers can maintain 6 feet apart and still hear the speaker.
- Provide space to allow workers to maintain a 6 foot distance from others during rest and meal periods.
- Avoid carpooling in shared vehicle spaces. Where the social distance cannot be maintained, wear face coverings when in a vehicle and sanitize between uses.

MORE INFORMATION

New York State Department of Health’s COVID-19 Webpage

www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/

Listing of Local Health Departments

www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/