

Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Migrant Farm Workers, Labor Camps Operators and their Employers

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Farming is an essential business operation and activity. Operators generate necessary supplies for citizens of Indiana. COVID-19 can spread easily in settings with many people living in close proximity, including living facilities for migrant farm workers. Farm owners and managers 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. Strict compliance 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 the Indiana State Department of 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 people 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

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, if possible, from people who are not sick.
- 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 sick people.
- Ventilate the room where persons with COVID-19 are housed on regular intervals, if possible, and make sure ventilated air outflow to the outdoors downwind from gathering areas or air intakes of other housing units. Negative pressure rooms are recommended.

Identify the nearest healthcare facility that provides care to uninsured people.

- A list of healthcare facilities providing care for uninsured patients is [provided](#).
- To view a map of hospital and healthcare clinics, click [here](#).
- If you cannot find a free or low-cost facility in your area contact your local health department for advice.
Map of Local Health Contacts: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm>

Promote Healthy Habits

Educate workers about hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

- Provide signs in English and Spanish with information about washing hands and protecting yourself and others from germs.**
- Provide information about social distancing in English and Spanish.**
- The CDC has COVID-19 specific [educational materials](#) available in both English and Spanish.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>

Provide supplies to eradicate COVID-19; not limited to alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and lined trash cans.

- Common sense access to cleaning supplies and an expectation of a clean environment provided through signage.
- Expectation of the use of hygienic employee practices.
- Workers should have access to these supplies at the worksite, all common areas, dormitory or sleeping quarters, and food preparation area.
- Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Bleach-water solution (1/3 cup to 1 gallon) in spray bottles must be labeled in accordance with the Office of the Indiana State Chemist.

- Provide a [disinfectant that is active against coronaviruses](#) to sanitize counters, bathrooms, and other areas.**
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Reference for field work standards:

1928.110 - Field Sanitation. | Occupational Safety and Health Administration
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2009-title29-vol9/pdf/CFR-2009-title29-vol9-sec1928-110.pdf>

COVID-19 is suspected of living on excrement for 2-14 days. Hygiene should be expected at all handwashing facilities with ample supply of consumable products required for workers, e.g. hand soap and disposable towels. Agricultural establishments shall provide the means to maintain adequate collection and containment of the products of both defecation and urination which is applied with toilet paper adequate to employee needs. Toilet facility includes biological, chemical, flush, and combustion toilets and sanitary privies.

Whenever possible, employ cleaning and maintenance staff to disinfect the most frequently contacted surfaces in communal areas such as sanitary facilities, dining halls, dish washing areas, laundry areas, etc. Examples of the surfaces that should be disinfected regularly include doorknobs, light switches, counters, sink faucets and valves, laundry machine lids and controls, toilet seats, etc.

Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

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

- If they have these symptoms, house them in the area designated for sick people and arrange for them to see a medical provider. 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. If they do not have their own vehicle, please assist with transportation. Circulate air outside by partially lowering window panes (weather permitting) and have the patient wear a mask.
- Call Healthcare Facility before transporting any ill persons to medical attention and use telehealth services where available.

If a worker starts having 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. 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.
 - If there are people with COVID-19 in the room, find a different place for people who have respiratory symptoms but have not been tested for COVID-19 to rest.
- Follow the instructions above to arrange for them to see a medical provider.
- Clean the personal area of the affected worker with sanitizing solution; launder bedding and infected clothing.

Let workers who have symptoms of respiratory illness rest, isolated from health workers, until they feel well.

- Create a plan for what to do if many workers are sick at the same time.
- Public health officials (e.g., local health department staff) will provide further instructions about isolation and release from isolation.
- Make sure workers have ample clean water and quality food 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.**

Workers diagnosed with COVID-19:

- Notify your [local county health department](#).
- Contact information can be found here: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm>
- Call the ISDH COVID-19 Call Center 877-826-0011 or email epiresource@isdh.in.gov.
- 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.

- No infected or exposed farmworker should be allowed or forced to return home prior to being cleared by the health department for travel.**

Return to work criteria for workers:

The current guidance for return to work for employees requires the following:

1. **At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.**
2. **No fever for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fever. Note that fever is defined currently as 100.4 or greater.**
3. **Other symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath have improved).**

To learn more about caring for people with COVID-19 in a group setting, please read:

[CDC's Preparing for COVID-19: Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes](#)

For additional information, please see the following resources:

- ❑ ISDH - [Novel Coronavirus: Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- ❑ CDC - [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- ❑ CISA - [Identifying Critical Infrastructure During COVID-19](#)
- ❑ BOAH - [Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources](#)
- ❑ DWD - [COVID-19 Information](#)
- ❑ ISDA - [Agriculture information for Stay at Home Order](#)

Additional Chemical Safety Information:

Protect Yourself: Cleaning Chemicals and Your Health. OSHA Poster (Publication 3569), (February 2012). https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_3569.pdf
Spanish. OSHA Publication 3570, (February 2012).
https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA_3570.pdf

Introduction to Selecting an EPA-Labeled Sanitizer
<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training/trainer-resources/>