

Interim Guidance for Migrant Labor Camp Operators and Employees Regarding COVID-19

As essential personnel, migrant agriculture employees provide a critical service through the planting, cultivating, harvesting and packaging of the many crops grown throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. In response to the growing concern regarding the safety of migrant labor camp employees and the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has summarized key Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations as well as VDH-specific recommendations and additional information for migrant labor camp employees and their employer(s) in Virginia.

About COVID-19

COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by infection with SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and in some cases the disease is fatal. Some people may have no symptoms, but can still spread the virus.

Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure** and may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

How COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is generally spread in two ways:

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (**within about 6 feet or 2**

meters).

- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

Steps Migrant Labor Camp Operators Can Take to Reduce Employee Exposure to COVID-19

This section describes basic steps that migrant camp operators and employees can take to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Be Prepared

Keep in Contact with Community Partners

- Maintain contact information for your local healthcare facilities, local health department, and other local/state agencies for assistance.
- Develop a plan to house sick employees away from healthy employees. Consult your local health department prior to moving sick employees to a location other than the migrant labor camp.

Plan Accordingly

VDH recommends migrant labor camp owners develop a plan for healthcare support if a employee becomes ill. Most people with COVID-19 develop [mild to moderate illness](#), and do not require medical care. In these situations, employers can self-isolate at home. If a employee needs medical care, a healthcare facility **OTHER THAN** a hospital emergency room should be used unless a employee is severely ill. If a employee needs care through a healthcare facility or hospital, call that facility or hospital prior to arrival to describe the situation.

- Plan for absences to allow sick employees to stay home when possible
- Ensure sufficient stocks of hygiene supplies, cleaning supplies, medical supplies, and personal care items are available to employees to prevent unnecessary trips of large groups of employees to retail stores
- Provide personal protective equipment (**facemasks and disposable gloves**) that may be needed if an employee develops symptoms
 - CDC recommends that all people wear a cloth face covering in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission
- Prior to employee arrival, separate beds **at least 6 feet or 2 meters apart**
- Review the floor plan of the camp facility to identify space to isolate workers who are exposed to COVID-19 or who test positive for COVID-19. ***Discuss space arrangements with your local health department.***
- Prior to employee arrival, post signage in English and the employees' native language throughout the camp about handwashing and develop a cleaning schedule. (See Education section for signage)
- To avoid overcrowding of dining areas, create a dining schedule and space out dining tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. Consider providing prepared/catered meals from a permitted food establishment such as a mobile food unit or prepared meal service company
- Discuss with local faith leaders to provide options for employees to practice their faith while exercising social distance

Promote Healthy Habits

Employee Monitoring

The employer or the occupational health program administrator is strongly encouraged to monitor symptoms of all employees for **14 days after arrival to the camp**. Employers may designate an employee such as supervisor to conduct verbal screening and document responses (see [Virginia Department of Health Daily Monitoring Log](#)).

If the employer does not have an occupational health program, determine if there are remote occupational health resources (e.g., telemedicine or on-call doctors available via phone) available to assist or provide guidance as necessary.

After the initial 14 days of monitoring, employees shall self-monitor for the remainder of their stay at the migrant labor camp.

Consider utilizing non-contact thermometers such as a temporal thermometer or disposable thermometers. Do not reuse thermometers prior to sanitizing them.

Inform and Encourage Employees: Hygiene and Social Distancing

● Provide signs in English and the employees' native language with information that reinforces healthy hygiene practices such as:

○ **Clean hands keep you healthy.** Employees are encouraged to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:

- When arriving at work and before they leave work;
- Before and after eating or using the toilet;
- After close interaction with other persons;
- After contacting shared surfaces or tools;
- Before and after wearing masks or gloves; and
- After blowing nose or sneezing

○ **Best practices:** Cover your mouth and nose when you cough/sneeze with your elbow; avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth without washing your hands; avoid sharing eating utensils, dishes, and cups.

○ **Avoid contact:** Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth without cleaning hands first. Avoid physical contact with others.

○ **Encourage social distancing:** Maintain more than **6 feet or 2 meters** of distancing between individuals. Discourage group activities. Areas to practice social distancing include:

■ **Recreation Spaces** (encourage individual exercise, but not team or group recreation activities)

■ **Dining Areas**

■ **Transport (make additional trips to allow for space in transport vehicles, employees sit with at least 6 feet or 2 meters of distance from each other or every other seat)**

■ **Living areas (rearrange furniture in living rooms, dens, dining rooms, etc.)**

Sanitation Practices and COVID-19

● Ensure employees have access to supplies such as soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and lined trashcans. Keep these items in common areas, sleeping areas, and areas where employees eat.

○ Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol

○ Use [EPA-registered disinfectant](#) or household bleach solutions to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Dilute bleach solutions as follows:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) or 74 mL bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons or 20 mL bleach per quart of water
- o Maintain regular housekeeping practices such as a schedule to include routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other high touch areas (doorknobs, tables, countertops, bathrooms, and stair railings).
- Disinfect transportation vehicles prior and after transporting employees

Prevent the Spread of COVID-19

If the employee has a positive test for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19:

- As soon as an employee develops symptoms of COVID-19, provide the individual with a facemask and isolate him or her from others.
 - o *If the employee is at greater risk of developing severe illness (e.g., aged 65 years or older or with an underlying condition such as chronic lung disease, chronic heart disease, diabetes, cancer, or weakened immune system), call a healthcare provider.*
 - o If the employee lives in a congregate or shared living space with other employees, ideally provide the employee with a private room with a door to use as an isolation area.
 - Limit movement outside of the isolation area
 - Assign a dedicated bathroom, ideally attached to the sleeping area
 - Exclude from activities
 - Provide meals within the isolation area
 - If leaving the isolation area is required, the employee should wear a face mask
 - If the employee requires medical attention, notify the healthcare facility prior to arrival
 - o Follow CDC guidance for [cleaning and disinfection](#).
 - o Follow CDC guidance for release from isolation:
 - *With testing:*
 - Resolution of fever without medication for three days;
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms; **and**
 - At least two negative results in a row collected at least 24 hours apart
 - *Without testing (more likely):*
 - Resolution of fever without medication for three days
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms; **and**
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

If an employee is a close contact of a known COVID-19 (positive test):

- Implement [CDC Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#) : CDC guidance provides information on the following:
 - **Pre-Screen:** Measure employee's temperature, assess and record symptoms prior to

work. Use the [Virginia Department of Health Daily Monitoring log](#), or a similar document, to assist with this monitoring

○ **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self monitor

○ **Wear a Mask:** Employees should wear masks at all times for 14 days of last exposure. Employers should issue face masks or approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages

○ **Social Distance:** Maintain 6 feet or 2 meters of social distancing within the camp

○ **Disinfect and Clean:** Clean and disinfect all areas(sleeping areas, common living areas, bathrooms, etc.) routinely

● If possible, a potentially exposed employee should self-quarantine for 14 days since the last potential exposure

● If individual quarantine cannot occur, grouping of exposed employees may be necessary

○ Employees who are not ill should not be grouped with employees who are ill

○ If grouping must occur, a large, well-ventilated room is preferable that allows for maintaining at least 6 feet between beds. Temporary barriers between beds (such as curtains) may be used

● If self-quarantine is not possible, the employee may continue to work as long as precautions as described in CDC guidance are followed (including wearing a face mask/cloth covering for 14 days after last exposure) and worker does not have COVID-19 symptoms

● If a the employee develops symptoms, the employee must stop working immediately and self-isolate. Contact your local health care provider.

Resources

1. [Virginia Department of Health Daily Monitoring Log](#)

2. Posters and Other Print Resources

a. ["Wash Your Hands" English](#)

b. ["Wash Your Hands" Spanish](#)

c. ["What To Do If You Are Sick?" English](#)

d. ["What To Do If You Are Sick?" Spanish](#)

e. ["Symptoms of COVID-19" English](#)

f. ["Symptoms of COVID-19" Spanish](#)

3. [Health Department Locator](#)

4. [Interim Guidance for Business and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19, Centers](#)

for Disease Control

5. [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19, Department of Labor](#)
6. [Virginia Department of Health, COVID-19 Response](#)

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