



## Recommended Guidance<sup>1</sup> for Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in Migrant Labor Camps

### I. Background

SAR-CoV-2 is a novel coronavirus that has emerged and caused coronavirus disease, abbreviated as COVID-19. Public health experts continue to learn about COVID-19, but based on current data and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (those within about six feet) via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Transmission to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented yet, but current evidence suggests that the virus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of material. Early evidence suggests that COVID-19 can spread more easily and is more deadly than seasonal influenza.

COVID-19 can spread in settings where many people live and work in close proximity, including living facilities and transportation for migrant farmworkers. Farmworkers have been designated essential workers, and should be provided with safe housing, transportation, and access to food, supplies, and medical care to minimize exposure.

### II. Purpose

**The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends that agricultural employers and migrant labor camp operators implement the following guidance to reduce exposure to and the spread of COVID-19 among migrant and seasonal farmworkers.** To reduce the impact of COVID-19 outbreak conditions on these essential workers, their employers, and the public, agricultural employers and migrant labor camp operators should immediately implement preventative measures and create a COVID-19 response plan.

This guidance and the accompanying checklist provide recommendations on how to implement the following measures and prevent the spread of COVID-19 at agricultural housing, transportation, and worksites:

- **Social distancing of at least six feet,**
- **Increased and regular sanitation/disinfection using product from EPA list N, <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against->**

[sars-cov-2,](#)

- **Frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,**
- **Provide alternate housing, food and supplies for symptomatic workers that are quarantined, and**
- **Coordination with public health departments, IDPH, and health care facilities.**

Additional guidance may be needed as new information about the virus, its transmission, and impacts, becomes available.

### **III. Symptoms of COVID-19**

Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the following symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- Gastrointestinal illness (nausea, diarrhea)
- New loss of taste or smell

Human coronaviruses can sometimes cause lower-respiratory tract illnesses, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

### **IV. How COVID-19 Spreads**

COVID-19 typically spreads from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets that form when the infected person coughs or sneezes;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands; and
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

### **V. Arranging for a Worker to Seek Medical Attention**

**Call 911 for a medical emergency:** Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who may have COVID-19. If possible, ask the worker to put on a mask or cloth face covering before medical help arrives. The CDC advises any person who develops the

following **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 to seek medical attention immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

This list is not all-inclusive. Please consult a medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

## **VI. What to Do If a Worker Becomes Ill**

- Allow workers to seek COVID-19 testing and treatment and provide transportation to medical care as needed.
- Ensure that workers with COVID-19 symptoms self-quarantine for no less than 10 days from symptom onset and at least 72 hours with resolving symptoms and resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
  - Provide alternate housing to quarantine symptomatic workers
  - Provide sufficient food and water for quarantine period
  - Ensure access to medical care
- Screen other workers who may have been exposed or come into close contact with sick workers.
- Notify your local health department or IDPH at (800)-889-3931 within one day of being informed of a known or suspected case of COVID-19, or any prevalence of COVID-19 symptoms.
- For migrant labor camps licensed by IDPH, notify IDPH's Division of Environmental Health at (217) 782-5830 within one day of being informed of a known or suspected case of COVID-19.

## **VII. Develop and Implement a COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plan**

**Use this guidance and the accompanying checklist** to develop a COVID-19 Prevention and Response Plan to protect essential farmworkers, camp operators, growers, and the public.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Implement the following measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19:**

- Screen workers upon arrival for underlying conditions, age and symptoms.
- Create social distancing-compliant housing facilities, even when this requires additional beds or quarters.
  - Allow for sleeping arrangements with at least six feet between workers.
  - Provide separate living facilities for workers that are over 60 or have underlying health conditions.
- Create social distancing-compliant transportation, even when this requires additional transportation vehicles or staggered transportation.
- Provide adequate space for workers to follow social distancing in shade during breaks and meals.
- Encourage social distancing in the field by staggering work tasks and shifts.
- Increase sanitation and cleaning of housing and transportation facilities.
- Provide handwashing stations and soap, and adequate time for frequent handwashing.
  - Provide sufficient sanitizing and handwashing supplies.
  - Designate a specific individual responsible for ensuring workers comply with health and sanitation requirements.
- Provide sufficient masks or cloth face coverings for all workers, especially those who exhibit symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.
- Encourage workers to stay home if they are feeling sick. Do not provide incentives for work attendance or penalize workers for taking time off for testing for COVID-19 or illness related to COVID-19. It is illegal for employers to retaliate against workers for raising safety concerns.
- Designate a specific individual to receive reports from workers who may have COVID-19 symptoms and coordinate transportation for such workers to obtain medical services.
- Establish alternate housing for symptomatic workers.
  - All housing facilities at licensed migrant labor camps must be inspected and approved by IDPH prior to occupancy.
  - Alternate housing should have separate sleeping areas with separate cooking and bathing facilities for quarantined workers.
  - Designate a specific individual whose sole responsibility is to care for quarantined workers, ensure they have sufficient food and supplies, that the quarantine is enforced, receive health and safety related concerns and

that transportation to medical care is provided.

- Educate workers about the measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**2. Prepare a facility-specific COVID-19 response team in the event of an outbreak:**

It is best to reach out to healthcare providers and facilities prior to the beginning of the season and establish a plan for managing cases of COVID-19. This should include:

- Identify actions to screen workers and address positive cases of COVID-19
- Identify emergency numbers for EMT, clinics, and hospitals
- Identify addresses of emergency medical facilities
- Identify alternate housing for symptomatic workers
- Identify supplies needed for alternate housing
- Identify a manager to lead the response to COVID-19 efforts
- Identify a lead worker to act as a liaison and facilitate response
- Identify a caretaker for those with symptoms
- Identify and implement preventative actions for:
  - Transport to and from fields
  - Working in the field
  - Migrant camp/living facilities

Reference:

<sup>1</sup> Source: "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19," U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA 3990-03-2020.

