

FACT SHEET: COVID-19 SAFETY FOR SEASONAL FARMWORKER EMPLOYERS

The global coronavirus pandemic has highlighted how essential our farmers and food producers are to the health of our nation. Many of our farms rely on the valuable services of seasonal and migrant farmworkers to tend, harvest, and ship their crops. These workers face unique risks in shared housing and transport and close physical, manual work. This fact sheet highlights the most important strategies to protect their health.

(For more detail, see [Maine's Interim Guidance for Agricultural Workers](#) and the [CDC's Guidance for Agricultural Workers](#).)

MAKE A PLAN

Look at your operation and make plans to **increase physical distancing to 6 ft or more, reduce the density of workers, and increase hygiene and sanitation measures.** Make plans for how you would **handle a positive case.**

QUARANTINE ON ARRIVAL

Employers are encouraged to observe 14-day quarantine for newly arriving workers. Ninety-five percent (**95%**) of people who get sick will do so **by 14 days after exposure.** Pay for workers during initial quarantines can be covered by the Family First Coronavirus Response Act. See DACF's [Guidance](#) for more. Be clear about who pays for what, and make sure the crew has access to groceries and other necessities.

Maine Mobile Health Program provides:

Daily health screenings
On-site COVID-19 testing
24-hr nurse triage phone line
Transportation to health appointments
Multilingual training for workers
Multilingual educational resources
Translators to communicate directly with workers in Spanish & Haitian Creole

1-888-351-9634

<http://www.mainemobile.org/covid-19/>

UNIVERSAL TESTING FOR WORKERS

The safest course of action is to observe a 14-day quarantine for newly arriving workers. If time does not permit a full 14-day quarantine, employers alternatively may consider conducting universal testing of all workers within the first 72 hours of arrival.

Additionally, workers should consider universal testing any time someone on the crew is

showing symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. DHHS recently announced [new testing protocols \(June 8, 2020\)](#) that allow most people in Maine with elevated risks to get tested whether they show symptoms or not, including migrant and seasonal workers.

LIMIT CHANCES OF EXPOSURE

The CDC identifies two main types of exposure:

1. Being in 'household contact': sharing a house with someone who's sick with COVID-19.
2. Being closer than 6 ft with someone sick with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more while they're sick or up to 48 hrs before they start showing symptoms.

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Adapt work processes to allow at least 6 ft physical distancing. In the places where you can't maintain physical distancing, have workers **wear facemasks** or work within their household groups.

GROUP WORK AND TRANSPORT BY HOUSEHOLD

All workers in a shared housing unit are considered in 'household contact' with each other. If one person in the household group gets sick, everyone else in the household group is considered exposed and will need testing. To contain the risk of exposure, **assign work or transportation by household groups** wherever possible, or to the same 'block' of household groups. Workers in household units should follow [CDC's Guidance for Households](#).

GIVE WORKERS GOOD INFORMATION

Provide workers with information resources in their languages and appropriate literacy levels so they can understand what you're asking them to do. The CDC has [multilingual Communication Toolkits](#) for this, and the [Maine Mobile Health Program](#) has resources and fluent staff who can speak directly to workers in their languages.

SCREEN FOR HEALTH BEFORE WORK SHIFTS

Take temperatures and screen for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) daily before work. Anyone with a fever above 100.4°F or showing symptoms should not be allowed to work and referred for medical advice. [Maine Mobile Health Program](#) can provide on-site or telehealth screenings in Spanish and Haitian Creole.

ACT IMMEDIATELY IF SOMEONE GETS SICK

If a worker shows symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, you must act immediately to prevent the spread to other workers. The sick worker needs to be referred for medical treatment. Uninsured workers can check their [options](#), and [Emergency MaineCare](#) is available to workers regardless of their documented status.

Remove sick workers from the work shift, shared transport, and shared housing. They need to be isolated and provided with care and food. Universal testing of all workers after a confirmed or suspected positive case of COVID-19 is recommended for farmworker crews.

Contact Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 to coordinate your public health response and contact OSHA at 207-626-9160 to inform them of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

See **Maine's Interim Guidance for Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers** for strategies for **cleaning**, **transportation**, **housing**, **worker training** and more.