

# ADVISORY FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKER PROTECTION DURING COVID-19 CRISIS ON THE CENTRAL COAST OF CALIFORNIA

**Adhering to already-stringent policies related to worker safety and hygiene.**

## **Employee Hygiene**

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- Employees should avoid sharing personal items with coworkers (i.e., food, dishes, cups, gloves, engaging in activities such as playing cards, etc.).
- Employees should sneeze or cough into tissues (and immediately discard the tissue) or their shoulder or elbows. They should then wash their hands right after.
- Employees should keep a minimum distance of 6 feet from other coworkers when possible (social distancing).
- Employees should wash/sanitize their hands multiple times daily, including before and after work, breaks, eating, and use of toilet facilities.
  - Follow CDC guidelines for personal hygiene, including using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol or washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Have soap or disinfectant, potable water, and single-use disposable towels available at worksites and throughout facilities.
- Reduce meetings and group gathering to essential communication only and limit such meetings to no more than 10 people if possible.
- Limit personal contact and grouping within the facility and worksites and limit the number of people using common facilities at any one time.
- As much as possible, maintain a distance of six feet (social distancing) to avoid spreading illness during work activities and breaks.

## **Employers with Ill Employees**

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- Require workers **not** to come to work if they are ill.
- Anyone with immediate family members that are ill should be required to stay home.
- Employees at work that develop symptoms of being ill should be sent home immediately.
- Observe work crews when they arrive to work.
  - Specifically inquire if anyone has experienced fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
  - Inquire if anyone has traveled to a high-risk area in the last 14 days or been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
    - If so, inquire when the exposure happened and consider sending them home.
  - If ill, contact medical provider or physician by phone before going to the medical office, clinic, or emergency room. Another option is to contact a tele-doctor.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, there is some immediate information that should be collected and actions taken to protect other employees, customers, and ensure transparent communication both internally and externally.
  - These steps include the employee's work location, work hours, general and specific work duties, if the employee has traveled to multiple worksites recently with timing, and the last day the employee was at work. Identify whom has had contact with the employee.
  - Verify that the employee has sought medical diagnosis and treatment as needed. If the employee has not sought medical diagnosis and treatment, encourage them to do so and consider sending them home until they do so.
  - If you cannot verify that the attending physician has contacted local health authorities, and you have also not been contacted by the health authorities, call the health authorities yourself immediately.
    - Do not disclose the employee name unless asked to by the Health Department.

- Health authorities will provide recommendations regarding the next steps in terms of interviewing employees and further protective measures.
- This employee should follow the direction and guidance of the relevant health department regarding specific quarantine requirements.

### **Perform Routine Environmental Cleaning in High Traffic Areas**

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- Sanitize workspaces throughout the day.
- Sanitize administrative, shipping/processing facilities, and any other enclosed spaces where people work multiple times throughout the day.
  - Pay particular attention to commonly touched areas including door handles, bathroom areas, lunchroom tables and chairs, kitchen areas, shared space and facilities, time clock areas, shared computers, tools, and any vehicles used at the facility (i.e., forklift or golf cart steering wheels) and more.
- Utilize off-hour times to complete an aggressive sanitation of common areas daily.
  - Use sanitizer and/or disinfectant spray each day to deep clean: lunchroom areas, meeting rooms, time clock areas, office rooms, shipping facility, and all other common rooms and facilities.
- Ensure that all bathrooms (portable and in place) are adequately stocked and serviced at regular intervals and disinfected as appropriate.
- Be considerate of social distancing recommendations when transporting employees and regularly sanitize worker transportation buses.

### **Training & Changes to Processes**

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- Train employees to:
  - Follow these standard operating procedures while the Monterey County “Shelter in Place” or California “Stay at Home” orders are in effect.
  - Provide training on COVID-19 prevention using resources available from the CDC and local health departments.
    - Include training on appropriate hand washing and hygiene practices and sanitation processes.
    - Any materials should be available in English and Spanish.
- When feasible, encourage alternative spacing of persons while harvesting and processing to expand the distance between individuals while conducting such activities.
- Be responsive to the personal needs of each employee.
  - The state has specifically indicated populations at risk to be those over the age of 65, residents and farmworkers with underlying health issues, residential care patients, and all those who care for these individuals are uniquely at risk.
  - Understand which of your employees this guidance applies to, consider whether there are alternative work options or if their current job can be modified to ensure precautions are in place.
  - Be responsive to state guidance and respectful of their decisions related to that guidance.
- Space work and processing tables/booths accordingly to increase social distancing, when possible.
- Encourage activities such as pre-assembly of cartons and pre-bagging when possible.
- Identify key processes and products and immediately cross-train employees in backup positions to be prepared when people must stay home.

### **Limit Non-Essential Visits and Travel**

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- Limit visitors to those necessary for the operation.
- To limit exposure of employees, emphasize on-line ordering for any direct to consumer sales with outside pick-up or delivery options.
- Visitors must be approved before arriving, and employees should keep social distancing six feet away from any visitor.

- Encourage employees to be safe outside of work and follow the Monterey County “Shelter in Place” and State “Stay at Home” order when not at work as well as all CDC recommendations.
- Eliminate all non-essential and non-related services, such as entertainment activities.

## References

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### Center for Disease Control

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/public-health-management-decision-making.pdf>
- [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html)
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#spreads>

### State of California

- <https://covid19.ca.gov/>

### Monterey County Public Health

- <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/>

### San Benito County Public Health

- <https://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth/>

### Santa Clara County Public Health

- <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/Pages/phd.aspx>

### Santa Cruz County Public Health

- <https://www.santacruzhealth.org/>

### California Strawberry Commission

- <https://www.calstrawberry.com/en.us/Coronavirus>
- <https://www.calstrawberry.com/en.us/Food-Safety/Tools-for-Food-Safety>

### Communication Resources

- COVID-19 Prevention Poster (English):  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/COVID19-ProtectYourselfandOthers.pdf>
- COVID-19 Prevention Poster (Spanish):  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Covid19-Poster-SPANISH.pdf>
- COVID-19 Alert Poster (English):  
[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Coronavirus\\_Alert\\_English.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Coronavirus_Alert_English.pdf)
- COVID-19 Alert Poster (Spanish):  
[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Spanish\\_Coronavirus\\_poster.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Spanish_Coronavirus_poster.pdf)