

# Health and Safety Guidelines for Dairy Farms and Producers

In order to minimize the risk from COVID-19 in the workplace, consider the following:

## ASSESS

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Conduct employee and visitor screenings

- Conduct health screening each time employees or visitors enter the facility, utilizing the attached “MDA Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist”.
- If an employee or visitor answers “Yes” to any of the screening questions or has a measured temperature reading above 100.0° F, they should be advised to contact their health care provider and seek testing. They should go home and stay away from other people. The employer should confirm that the employee can self-isolate (separate from others living in the same household) while waiting for their test results. Local emergency management and local public health agencies can assist the employee if they cannot self-isolate.
- If you have an employee who needs testing and your local clinic is unable to accommodate the request, work with your local county public health agency. As part of the critical food producing industry, suspect employees are a priority for COVID-19 testing.
- Consider providing a release form to the employee, medical clinic, or wherever sampling will occur to specifically allow the farm to receive test results in real time for those employees who choose to sign it. (**Authorization for Disclosure of Protected Health Information to Employer** – Request from the MDA). This allows dairy farm management to perform their own workplace follow-up, if necessary, to exclude co-worker contacts of COVID-positive employees as quickly as possible.

## PLAN

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Develop health and safety guidelines specific to your operation. Require all employees, vendors, and visitors to adhere to this plan. The plan should address the following:

- **Social Distancing and Barriers**  
Implement distancing measures in the facility that allow for workers’ physical distancing of 6 feet. Examples include:
  - » Stagger work-shift schedules and mark out 6-foot distances to prevent congregating in common areas (entrances, health screening checkpoints, time clock areas, handwashing stations and lunchrooms).
  - » Consider the installation of barriers that can provide shielding between employees if the situation doesn’t allow for 6-foot distances.
  - » Remove unnecessary doors to reduce contact with everyday objects such as doorknobs and to increase airflow.
  - » Designate additional areas for breaks and meals such as picnic tables or personal vehicles.
  - » Consider forming employee teams specific to each shift to limit potential virus spread to one small group.

- **Personal Hygiene**

Encourage employees to practice good hygiene. Examples include:

- » Post handwashing instructions at handwashing locations that are quickly and easily understood. Here is an example of an illustrated, printable poster: [www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/wash/dontforget.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/handhygiene/wash/dontforget.pdf).
- » Stock handwashing stations with supplies of soap and single use towels; provide additional stations where needed.
- » Provide other work areas (front offices, lunchroom, farm equipment/vehicles, etc.) with hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes.
- » Reinforce practice of good cough and sneeze etiquette. Here is an example of an illustrated printable poster: [www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/hcpposter.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/cyc/hcpposter.html).

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Facial Coverings**

Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that is spread person-to-person through droplets that are propelled into the air when a person coughs, sneezes, or talks. Examples of facial covering and PPE protocols include:

- » Require all workers and visitors routinely wear cotton face masks, face coverings, or other disposable masks and/or face shields, in order to reduce spread of the virus. Face masks should be used along with the standard PPE that is needed to perform regular job duties such as washable coveralls, boots, and latex or leather gloves.
- » Provide the required PPE and facial coverings, along with training on proper usage, to all workers at no cost to the worker.

- **Communication**

Address COVID-19 communication protocols in your plan. Examples include:

- » Institute a process for workers to report COVID-19 symptoms and other hazards in the workplace.
- » Communicate clearly that workers will not face adverse consequences for staying home when they are sick.
- » Provide information in languages understood by workers, and prominently post instructions and reminders about illness symptoms, handwashing and hygiene etiquette, and procedures for reporting illness. Click here for key Coronavirus messages translated into multiple languages: [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/keymessages.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/keymessages.html).

## **CLEAN, SANITIZE and DISINFECT**

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In addition to ensuring that workers are following label directions and observing contact times to ensure cleaning and disinfection is effective, consider the following:

- Producers are encouraged to check with their chemical suppliers to help them select appropriate products that work against coronavirus and comply with the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO).
- In addition to sanitation already taking place in the milkhouse, use sanitizing and/or disinfecting products to fully clean and sanitize other work area equipment (steering wheels, equipment controls, hand-held tool handles, etc.) and common areas at least daily, and at every shift change. Pay special attention to high touch areas such as stair railings, doorknobs, computers, light switches, as well as any partitions installed for maintaining distancing between employees.
- Consider designating and/or adding staff to clean and disinfect throughout the facility.
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectants to disinfect surfaces in common areas that do not fall under PMO guidelines. Use the following list as a guideline [www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

## CONCERNS

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- **What can you expect if a worker is laboratory-confirmed with COVID-19?**
  - » The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will call the ill worker to interview them. MDH will ask about their illness history and household and workplace contacts.
- **When can an ill worker return to work?**
  - » An ill person who tests positive, should stay at home and, whenever possible, have their own room and bathroom to reduce spread to other household members. They need to stay isolated at home until their symptoms have resolved and all three of these conditions are met:
    - Symptoms have improved (this can take up to 14 days) AND,
    - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND,
    - At least three days have passed with no fever (without use of fever reducing medications).
- **What about workplace and household contacts of COVID positive workers?**
  - Farms are considered critical infrastructure and can ask asymptomatic workplace contacts with concerning exposures to continue working in the event they would be unable to operate without these workers. However, MDH recommends that workplace contacts in critical infrastructure industries self-quarantine at home for 10 days whenever possible.
  - Household contacts must stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days.
- **What if you are the housing provider?**
  - » If you provide housing, ill persons must be separated from well persons.
  - » If it is not feasible to have a separate room for each ill person, and if there is more than one ill worker, ill workers may be grouped together, but separated from non-ill workers. For ill individuals, consider using a large, well-ventilated room. In areas where ill workers are staying, keep beds at least 6 feet apart, use temporary barriers between beds (such as curtains), and request that ill persons sleep head-to-toe.
- **How can you help your employees?**
  - » Provide assistance to the worker while sick and recovering.
  - » If a worker tests positive for COVID-19 and lacks access to critical, essential items that would prevent them from self-isolating at home, contact local public health. ([www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/connect/findlph.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/connect/findlph.html))
  - » If the worker 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), consult a health care provider.
  - » If the worker's symptoms are getting worse, help workers seek healthcare by providing resources such as access to a phone, transportation, or other resources necessary to get needed care.
  - » If the worker has trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or other emergency signs, call 911.

## MORE INFORMATION/RESOURCES

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Keep up to date on the latest information for businesses and workers and update your COVID-19 Business Plan, as needed.

- » Minnesota Department of Agriculture: [www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/covid-19-agriculture)
- » Minnesota.gov statewide COVID-19 Response: [mn.gov/covid19](http://mn.gov/covid19)
- » Minnesota Department of Health: [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)
- » Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development: [mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/](http://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/)
- » Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry: [www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates)
- » CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)
- » FDA's Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): [www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19](http://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19)
- » CDC's guidance on Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html#Reducing-the-Spread-of-COVID-19-in-Workplaces](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html#Reducing-the-Spread-of-COVID-19-in-Workplaces)
- » FDA's Use of Respirators, Facemasks, and Cloth Face Coverings in the Food and Agriculture Sector During Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic: [www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/use-respirators-facemasks-and-cloth-face-coverings-food-and-agriculture-sector-during-coronavirus](http://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/use-respirators-facemasks-and-cloth-face-coverings-food-and-agriculture-sector-during-coronavirus)
- » Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI/MNOSHA) site for COVID-19 Preparedness Plan templates: [www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-novel-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosha-compliance-novel-coronavirus-covid-19)
- » CDC's guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)
- » Worker Resource Guide: [www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/worker\\_resource\\_guide.pdf](http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/worker_resource_guide.pdf)
- » MDA COVID Question Line: [mdaresponds@state.mn.us](mailto:mdaresponds@state.mn.us)
- » Dairy & Meat Inspection Main Line: 651-201-6300 or email [dairy.results@state.mn.us](mailto:dairy.results@state.mn.us)
- » MN Farm and Rural Helpline: 1-833-600-2670
- » Rural Finance Authority Office: 651-201-6004