



COVID-19 Guidance for Farmworkers and Farmworker Housing

Farmworkers are a crucial workforce in Benton and Franklin Counties. Below are general recommendations for all farm employers to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

General Recommendations

All employees and visitors should be screened at the beginning of every shift or when they come to the farm for COVID-19 symptoms. Everyone should be asked “YES or NO”, within the last 24 hours or since your last shift (for new employees or employees who have not worked in the last 7 days ask about symptoms in the last 7 days), have you had any of the following new symptoms:

- Fever (100.4°F or higher), or feeling feverish,
- Cough,
- Shortness of breath,
- Sore throat,
- Muscle aches that may not have been caused by a specific activity (such as physical exercise),
- Chills,
- Headache,
- Loss of smell or taste.

Anyone answering “Yes” should be excluded. Employees with symptoms should not be allowed to work and visitors should not be allowed to enter the farm. Employees should be sent home and isolated. Isolation means they are kept away from everyone else, including restroom access, sleeping, and eating.

People with symptoms should contact their healthcare provider. You can also call BFHD for a consultation on ill employees. Employees and occupants should remain home if they are sick. Inform them about any sick leave policies.

Guidelines

1. Employees and visitors should practice physical distancing and be kept 6 feet apart as much as possible, this includes when working outside, during meals, and while sleeping. Working outside does not remove all risk of COVID-19 exposure. Physical distancing should be done anytime workers and/or visitors are together including during meals and breaks.

Environmental Health & Community Health Centers

Kennewick Office:
7102 W. Okanogan Place
Kennewick, WA 99336
Phone: 509-460-4200

Pasco Office:
412 W. Clark St
Pasco, WA 99301
Phone: 509-547-9737

Adapted from Grant County Health District

2. It is recommended that all employees and visitors always wear nose and mouth coverings such as a bandana or sewn mask on the farm and when going into public places such as stores. It is inappropriate to divert any healthcare supplies, including surgical masks or other Personal Protective Equipment for public use. It is therefore only recommended that businesses and the public use nontraditional face covers or cloth masks instead.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Proper handwashing or sanitation must be readily available to all employees, volunteers, and visitors. CDC recommends that people wash their hands often, and if soap and water is not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
4. Maintain a record of all visitors. Collect contact information, date, and travel from visitors, including vendors, inspectors, etc.
5. As much as possible, keep work groups together in daily operations to limit the spread of any potential illness.

Farmworker Housing Recommendations

- 1) Create a plan for how you will isolate ill workers from those who are not sick. This may include reserving a housing unit only for ill farmworkers or coordinating with hotels for isolation.
- 2) Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces frequently and at least daily. Frequently disinfect things such as doorknobs, tables, handrails, and shared tools. Cleaning and sanitizing guidance can be found on our website [here](#) or on our Open For Business Page under Resources.
- 3) Increase the distance between people in sleeping spaces, where feasible. Offering individual rooms for groups or families is ideal, but not always available. In shared spaces, a “head-to-toe” sleeping arrangement with a minimum of six feet of distance between beds is recommended.
 - a. **Note:** Future emergency changes to WAC 296-307 and WAC 246-358 may have requirements that differ from those above.
- 4) Separate sick occupants from those without symptoms.
 - a. Isolate sick workers in a housing unit separate from workers with no symptoms.
 - b. Facilities without a housing unit to separate sick workers may work with local hotels on an alternate isolation facility.





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- c. Alternative housing plans using tents will have to be submitted to the Washington State Dept of Health for review and approval.
- 5) If you have occupants or employees exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please report on the [COVID-19 Outbreak Reporting Form](#), or access on our web page at bfhd.wa.gov/covid19, Open For Business page. You can also contact us at for guidance at 509-460-4200.
 - 6) Eliminate all large group activities. Increase the distance between workers during meals/free time. Plan activities that do not require close physical contact, stagger outdoor time.
 - 7) Discourage visitation. Discourage visitation at your facility and offer alternative methods of visitation (Skype, FaceTime, etc.), if available.
 - 8) Anytime shared transportation, such as busses or vans, are used to move employees, groups should be limited to no more than 5 people. This includes transportation to fields/orchards and to town for shopping. When possible, send only 1-2 people to town for shopping with a list for the entire housing unit or take multiple trips with few people in each trip. Shared vehicles should be sanitized between groups and at least daily.
 - 9) As much as possible, keep work groups together in daily operations and housing assignments.

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