

COVID-19 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Provincial Abattoir COVID-19 Response Guidance

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Preparing for COVID-19 at Your Facility

COVID-19 is a reality that may affect your operation. However, you can take actions to lower the effects to your employees, business, customers and community.

Facilities are encouraged to have documented COVID-19 plans which clearly identify mitigation measures to address exposure risks and actions to take if there is an employee with COVID-19. This can prevent an outbreak among staff and reduce the chances of a facility shutdown.

In addition, as per Workplace Safety and Health regulations, it is the responsibility of an employer to assess risks to the safety and health of workers in the workplace (including biological risks) and to implement control measures to minimize those risks, as far as reasonably practicable.

While certain public health measures may not be possible in all operations, facilities should recognize their challenges and outline the mitigation measures they will take to address risks.

Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development (ARD) has prepared the following guidance and suggestions to assist you in developing a documented COVID-19 response plan for your facility.

Identify and Implement Mitigation Measures

Physical Distancing

Document your facility's approach to physical (social) distancing to maintain a distance of at least two metres/six feet to reduce close, prolonged contact. For example document your strategy to:

- avoid line-ups (e.g., entry to production areas, hand wash stations, time clocks, etc.)
 - stagger scheduled start times
 - mark floors indicating two metres/six feet distances
- avoid gatherings during breaks/meals
 - arrange break/meal schedules to have a limited number of workers in the same room at any given time
 - arrange seating so chairs have the recommended distance between them
 - assign seating
 - designate additional break areas (In some facilities employees are eating outdoors.)
 - remove non-essential objects (e.g., newspapers, magazines) from common areas
- enable office personnel to work at home or ensure office spaces are appropriately distanced

- discourage in-person meetings and group discussions
 - instead, use technology such as email, telephone, video or teleconferencing

Where physical distancing is not possible policies may include the following instructions:

- keeping teams on the production line as small as possible and consistently having the same people work together (cohorting)
- maintaining, as much as possible, the same position on the production line throughout a shift, unless there are physical, chemical or, ergonomic constraints or risks
- staggering workstations on either side of processing lines so that food workers are not facing one another
- spacing out workstations
- reducing the speed of production lines
- installing physical barriers between workers when two metre distance cannot be respected (e.g., plexiglas)
- marking floors to designate traffic patterns to prevent areas of congestion
- avoiding sharing of equipment (e.g., knives, scoops, etc.)
- wearing a non-medical mask and protective eye wear, or an anti-fog visor to cover the face (only if wearing glasses or a visor does not present a risk to workers' safety; if the work increases the risk of dust, a higher protective level mask may be required)

Consider your approach to physical distancing in shipping and receiving areas:

- Arrange for shipments to be received in a manner that minimizes the access of visitors (e.g., truck drivers) to your building. If possible:
 - truck drivers should not leave their vehicles during delivery.
 - use technology (e.g., cell phones, tablets, or radios) to avoid face to face contact.
- Unload materials to a designated area, while respecting the two metre distance between individuals.
- Where possible, limit the exchange of physical documents. Do not share pens.

Personal Hygiene

Ensure employees are knowledgeable about the importance of personal hygiene in minimizing COVID-19 risk. Make sure employees are able to follow proper procedures by:

- ensuring that facilities are available for hand washing (running water, soap, paper towels, etc.) and encouraging frequent hand washing
- providing hand sanitizer (greater than or equal to 60 per cent alcohol) if soap and water are not readily available (e.g., for shipping and receiving, or in office areas), keeping in mind that hand washing facilities are a mandatory requirement in food processing facilities
- promoting proper sneezing and coughing etiquette (into a bent elbow or in a tissue that is immediately discarded, followed by hand washing as soon as possible)

Use of Masks

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) has advised that wearing a facial covering/ non-medical mask has not been proven to protect the person wearing it.

- Wearing a non-medical mask is an additional measure you can take to protect others around you (in situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain).
- Masks alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19. You must consistently and strictly adhere to good hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing.

If your facility chooses to require employees to wear masks, document where and how the masks are to be worn. Include instructions for how to put on and safely remove masks, and how to handle masks following removal. Instructions may include information as follows:

- workers must not share face masks unless sanitized by an approved method
- use a clean mask
- wash hands with soap and water or use appropriate hand sanitizer before putting on a mask
- pick up mask by the ties or ear loops; avoid touching the mask
- ensure it fits securely with ties or ear loops
- resist the urge to touch or adjust the mask
- change masks if they get wet or soiled
- hold the mask from ties or ear loops while removing it and don't touch the mask; avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- wash hands with soap and water or use appropriate hand sanitizer
- place cloth mask in laundry (or dispose of non-reusable masks in a sanitary manner)

For more guidance you can review the following information from PHAC:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

Policy for Employees to Notify

Document and implement a policy to prevent employees from coming to work sick.

- ensure that employees report any symptoms of respiratory illness before or during work
- send employees home or instruct employees to stay home if they have any symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, cough, respiratory problems, or are required to be in mandatory isolation
- take measures to encourage employees stay at home if they have any symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g., not requiring sick notes)

Education is key to ensuring employees know their role in preventing COVID-19 spread in your facility and how their actions could impact their colleagues, the business, customers and their community. Clearly communicate expectations. This can be accomplished by:

- training sessions or meetings with employees (virtual)

- signage at entrances, and throughout facility (e.g., near time clocks, hand washing stations, lunch rooms, etc.)
- email communications

To ensure employees understand the COVID-19 and other work hazard training they receive, instruction or communications should occur in the first language of the worker.

Travel Policies

Develop travel policies that address business and personal travel.

- All non-essential business related travel is discouraged. It is important to review [current public health](#) orders to determine how they impact travel plans.
- If employees or members of their household have travelled ensure that they have followed all public health requirements for quarantine (14 days) and are symptom free prior to returning to the workplace.

Visitor Policies During COVID-19

Develop a policy to limit visitors at your facility to only essential services required to run your business. Consider the following:

- pest control operators
- laundry services
- maintenance/service personnel
- janitorial services
- sales personnel

Unnecessary visits should be cancelled. When possible, use technology to communicate.

Post signs at entrances asking visitors to not enter if they have signs of illness.

Keep your visitors' log updated.

Screening Policies

To help maintain a healthy workforce and workplace, it is recommended that you develop and implement a screening policy (daily health check) for all employees and visitors (including contractors) to determine if they should be excluded from your facility.

Screening questions may include:

- Do you or does anyone in your household have any symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g., fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties)?
- Have you been tested for COVID-19?
 - If so, are the results available?
 - Have you been advised by health officials to isolate? If so, starting when and for how long?
- Has anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19? Have you had contact with anyone who has COVID-19?
 - Have you consulted with and received guidance from health officials?

- Have you been advised by health officials to isolate? If so, starting when and for how long?

Or see the [screening tool](#) on the Manitoba government [COVID-19 website](#).

Don't let people enter your facility if they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they have not completed the recommended isolation time of 14 days after being in contact with someone who has COVID-19. Advise them to contact Health Links–Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll free). Keep worker information confidential.

COVID-19 tests results can be expedited for essential workers, which includes employees working in abattoirs. To do so, please provide employees with your company's tailored requisition, if available or instruct employees to ensure the following information is added by the health official completing the requisition form at the test site:

- c.c. results to Dr. Denise Koh, Chief Occupational Medical Officer, Fax 204-948-2209
- a comment that the employee is an "essential worker/food processing", the name of the provincial company, and the code "Si_021"

Consider implementing temperature checks for employees prior to entering the facility. Use a thermal infrared thermometer and do not permit individuals who have a temperature of 38°C or higher to enter your facility. Ensure temperature checks are non-contact and personnel conducting the checks are appropriately trained.

Return to Work Policy

Develop a policy identifying requirements to be met prior to an employee returning to work following COVID-19 infection or being required to self-quarantine. Requirements may include:

- no employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 is allowed to return to work until 14 days has passed from the development of the first symptoms (or date tested if they are asymptomatic), as long as they don't have a fever and are clinically improving
- employees required to self-quarantine following close contact with a case will not be allowed to return to work until they have stayed in self-quarantine for a 14 day period and they remain free of illness

Communication Plan

Develop a plan to regularly keep employees and stakeholders (e.g., Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development inspection services, regular onsite service providers/contractors) informed if an employee is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19.

Sharing information will limit anxiety. Consider providing regular updates on:

- actions taken (e.g., work occurring with health officials, sanitation practices)
- procedures that will be followed to minimize risk to employees
- how need for short term closure would be determined

Develop a communication plan for contacting appropriate health officials (e.g., occupational health/public health), to ensure timely guidance can be received.

For further occupational health/public health guidance contact Dr. Denise Koh - Chief Occupational Medical Officer denise.koh2@gov.mb.ca.

COVID-19 Sanitation Plan

Develop an approach for enhanced routine sanitation when responding to an employee testing positive for COVID-19. Enhancing your cleaning and sanitizing efforts will help control risks that might be associated with workers who are ill. However, the sanitary procedures that facilities are already following to protect food safety will also help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19. Consider the following:

- sanitize or disinfect frequently touched areas (tables, counters, doorknobs, phones, computer accessories, pens, etc.) on every work shift or whenever someone leaves the area and before someone else enters the area
- in the event that an employee tests positive for COVID-19, conduct a deep clean procedure of all impacted areas including lunch rooms, washrooms, etc.
- ensure that the sanitizer/disinfectant you use is approved for use in a food processing application, because some disinfectants can be toxic and are unsuitable for food premises or food contact surfaces as they can constitute a chemical hazard
- follow the label or manufacturer’s directions for proper use of the sanitizer/disinfectant

What to do if an Employees Tests Positive

Develop a protocol to follow if a worker has symptoms or is a confirmed COVID-19 positive case. A check list may be a useful tool to ensure you cover all steps.

Step	Applicable Policies/Procedures	Check
1. Employee notifies the facility they have been referred for testing <u>or</u> employee with symptoms of COVID-19 is sent home.	According to your policies/ procedure to notify , employees have a responsibility to notify the workplace if they have been referred for testing or if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Or: Your screening procedure has identified an employee who has had high risk contacts or has symptoms of COVID-19.	
2. Contact public health officials (PH) and occupational health (OH) for support and guidance. Dr. Denise Koh - Chief Occupational Medical Officer denise.koh2@gov.mb.ca	Follow your communication plan .	

<p>3. Begin investigation, determine areas where the employee has worked and who they have worked closely with. (If possible, maintain records of employee assignments to enable timely retrieval during an investigation.)</p>	<p>With guidance from occupational health/public health, collect needed information (e.g., trace personal contacts, determine work duties carried out, map movements within facility, identify surfaces contacted, car pools, etc.)</p> <p>Limit questions to work applicable information and protect privacy.</p> <p>Health information should be kept confidential and only be shared with those required to be notified</p>	
<p>4. Conduct risk assessment, follow health measures recommended by PH/OH to reduce the spread of COVID-19.</p>	<p>With guidance from occupational/public health identify risks based on information gathered in step three.</p>	
<p>5. Consider course of action in consultation with health officials e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If one isolated case, continue to monitor situation. • If >1 case, or high risk contact between employees, consider short term closure. 	<p>With guidance from occupational/public health determine appropriate course of action based on risks identified in step four.</p> <p>Make decision on whether your facility can safely operate.</p>	
<p>6. Inform impacted employees and ensure they follow recommended isolation periods before returning to work. Communicate with all employees to prevent panic.</p>	<p>Follow your communication plan.</p>	
<p>7. Properly disinfect affected areas.</p>	<p>Follow your COVID-19 sanitation plan.</p>	
<p>8. Screen employees returning to work (see screening policy).</p>	<p>Continue to follow your COVID-19 screening policy.</p> <p>Follow policy on return to work following COVID-19 positive test or mandatory isolation.</p>	

For More Information

Contact the Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development, Food Safety and Inspection branch at: foodsafety@gov.mb.ca or call **204-795-8418** in Winnipeg.