

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

FOR FARMS AND AGRIBUSINESS



Farms and agribusinesses have unique challenges with the rapidly spreading COVID-19. Polk County Public Health and the Northwestern Mental Health Center care about you and your family's health and encourage the following recommendations to limit exposure and risk related to COVID-19 and ensure long and productive careers on your farm. It is critical to consider ways to limit person-to-person spread and practice social distancing through the planting and harvest season. These documents are recommended for all farmers, ag business owners, ag workers, parts and equipment suppliers, seed suppliers, financial institutions, attorneys and all other agribusinesses in Polk County. The following advice pertains to all owners, managers and employees:

STAYING HEALTHY FOR THE WORK SEASON:

1. Rest well, eat well, and stay hydrated with healthy fluids.
2. Avoid risky and damaging health activities.
3. Avoid locations and crowds that elevate risk for infection from others.
4. Use virtual platforms for meetings when possible.
5. Encourage use of non-contact methods of greetings; avoid hand shaking.
6. Take care of your emotional health by taking breaks from the news, getting outside to enjoy the warmth, & connecting with others via phone, text, and email.

SAFE PRACTICES FOR WORKERS AT THE FARM:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and hand sanitizing with at least 60% alcohol is very important to prevent the spread of germs. Also, avoid eating with unwashed hands.
- Nitrile or other approved gloves for handling oils and chemicals that are already in your shop or vehicles are helpful in controlling the spread of infection. Don't forget to wash your hands.
- Cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow. If your cough or sneeze is due to a suspected illness you are likely transmitting germs.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet while working.
- If two or more people must work closely together and physical distancing cannot be maintained, follow the CDC guidelines for cloth face coverings, wear gloves and frequently wash hands. Be careful when handling paper, tools, or parts by multiple persons.

- Clean and disinfect operator environments and all high-touch surfaces at the beginning and end of every shift and when changing drivers/operators utilizing a simple cleaning kit made up of appropriate tools for application and wipe-down.
 - CDC Cleaning & Disinfecting: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
 - Vehicle cleaning video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ugx9hxr7w8> or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDUUb1_0P3U
 - If you are sick stay home. Every person with COVID-19 is capable of infecting three or more people, so coming to work while ill and not isolating at home may infect others including co-workers and family. If you have questions regarding symptoms or how long to stay home when sick call your healthcare provider or the Polk County Public Health Nurse line.
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TAKE ACTION TO MANAGE THE SAFETY PRACTICES OF YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS:

1. The **health and safety** of your employees, contractors, and customers is vital to your enterprise – it is good business to provide the best health and prevention training and practices.
2. There may be exposure **risk and liability factors** if a business owner fails to train employees and others in accepted safety practices during a pandemic.
3. **Keeping your workforce healthy** and working is important to them and to you. Please keep informed, listen to the experts, ask questions, and follow the recommendations of federal, state, and local agencies and authorities.

SAFE PRACTICES FOR BUSINESSES AND SUPPLIERS:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and hand sanitizing with at least 60% alcohol is important to prevent the spread of germs.
- Nitrile or other approved gloves are helpful in controlling the spread of infection.
- Cough or sneeze into the inside of the elbow.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet while working.
- Not spreading infection – If two or more people must work closely together and physical distancing cannot be maintained, follow the CDC guidelines for cloth face coverings, wear gloves, and frequently wash hands. Be careful when handling paper, tools, or parts by multiple persons.
- Clean and disinfect employee work environments utilizing a simple cleaning kit made up of appropriate tools for application and wipe-down. Be deliberate and thorough, following logical handling and cleaning protocols.
- Provide digital receipts or offer simple technology solutions for paperless/touchless processes; process tickets whenever possible.
- Clean and disinfect customer or employee-high touch surfaces often – touch screens, keyboards, counters, payment points, rest rooms, break area surfaces, door hardware, etc.

Please contact Polk County Public Health at 218.281.3385 with questions or for further resources.