MINNESOTA

COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for the Meatpacking Industry

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

Employee and visitor screening

- Conduct screening each time employees or visitors enter the facility. Use the following verbal screening for all persons:
- Have you had any of the following symptoms since your last day at work or the last time you were here? Please answer "Yes" or "No" to each question:
    - A new fever (100 F or higher), or feeling feverish?
    - A new cough?
    - Shortness of breath?
    - A new sore throat?
    - New muscle aches?
- Conduct temperature screening if it can be done with proper social distancing and hygiene.
- If a worker answers "Yes" to **any** of the screening questions **or** has an oral or aural temperature **above 99.5°** confirmed with oral or aural thermometer, the worker should be further evaluated by a plant occupational health nurse, who can determine if the employee can go home to recover, or should report to healthcare. In addition, they can confirm that isolation is feasible in the home environment and can request assistance from the local public health department for housing and any needed services.

Cleaning and disinfection

- Fully clean and disinfect work area equipment and common areas at least daily, and at every shift change. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectants to sanitize surfaces.
- Increase staffing for cleaning and disinfecting necessary to increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection throughout the facility including break areas, lunch rooms and bathrooms
- If a worker becomes ill at work, their work area must be cleaned and disinfected immediately before another worker may be assigned to their work area.
- Check that you are following label directions and observing contact times to ensure cleaning and disinfection is effective.
- Pay special attention to high touch areas such as stair railings, tools, guards, doorknobs, computers, etc.
- CDC has issued guidance: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html.
- Ensure the facility is adequately ventilated and use air filters in systems where this is feasible.

Distancing

- Implement distancing guidelines in the facility.
- Implement operational changes that allow for workers' physical distancing of 6 feet required by CDC guidelines and to effectively use personal protective equipment, including mask and face shields.
- Install partitions of plexiglass or stretched plastic on a frame of nonporous, smooth material to provide barrier protection between workers where physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be consistently maintained.
- Designate one-way entrances and exits in and out of the facility to support 6-foot physical distancing for workers.
- Designate an area for isolating workers who show symptoms of COVID-19 infection, such as a wellness area, isolated first aid station or other area where access can be restricted.
- Mark out 6-foot distances or circles for workers to stand in while they wait to punch in, to conduct health assessments, to perform handwashing, waiting for transportation and in other areas where workers would normally congregate.
- Mark out a 6-foot line in front of desks used by staff.
- Ensure 6-foot distances between chairs and people during meetings.
- Designated staff to monitor and instruct workers about compliance with distancing protocols and hygiene requirements.
- Routinely inspect, maintain, clean and disinfect separation barriers and other safeguards.

Production, work-shift schedules and work-break schedules

- Adjust line speeds so workers can maintain distancing.
- Stagger work-shift schedules to prevent congregating in changing rooms, entrance areas, transport areas, health screening areas, timeclock areas.
- Revise break times to prevent congregating in cafeterias and breakrooms.
- Designate additional areas for breaks and meals.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and facial coverings

- Require that all workers routinely wear cotton face masks, face coverings or disposable masks along with the standard PPE that is needed.
- Limit the use of filtering facepiece respirators by following other COVID-19 exposure control strategies and use of other facial coverings.
- Required PPE, along with training, is to be provided and paid for by the employer.

Personal hygiene

- Require and allow workers sufficient time to wash their hands frequently, including arrival and departure from workplace, before and after using the restroom, before eating and drinking and after touching surfaces that may be contaminated.
- Have handwashing facilities easily available that can be accessed without workers congregating in groups.
- Maintain ample supplies of soap and hand towels for handwashing.

- Provide additional (portable) handwashing stations, where needed.
- Provide work areas with hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes.
- Require cough and sneeze etiquette.

Communication

- Communicate with workers about actions being taken to prevent COVID-19 exposure through routine meetings, postings, including electronic postings, the company website and start-of-day reminders.
- Institute a process for workers to report COVID-19 symptoms and other hazards in the workplace.
- Remind workers not to come to work if they are having symptoms of COVID-19 and fully inform and allow workers to use sick leave and other benefits if they are ill.
- Provide information in languages understood by workers and prominently post instructions and reminders about illness symptoms, handwashing and hygiene etiquette and to report if they are feeling ill.

Orientation of COVID-19 Business Plan

- Provide an orientation for workers about the company's required COVID-19 Business Plan and the measures taken to minimize exposure to COVID-19, including changes to production, maintenance, human resources and worker safety.
- Include information about the COVID-19 virus, such as illness symptoms, methods of transmission, proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and other safeguards to prevent exposure.
- Managers and supervisors will monitor the effectiveness of the COVID-19 Business Plan.

Business travel

- Restrict or suspend business travel.
- Use virtual platforms for meetings when possible.

Working remotely

- Allow workers to work remotely if they are able to perform their work.
- Limit workers in business offices to only those deemed critical to facility operations.

Visitor restrictions

- Screen visitors prior to their arrival on site and confirm they have had no travel to destinations with widespread COVID-19 transmission within the past 14 days.
- Follow CDC risk-assessment guidance. Limit visitors to those essential to business operations and restrict where visitors can go within the facility.

Employment and human resources items

Employment status

- Clarify employment status with workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, including alternative work shifts, working from home, not working and wage changes.
- Clarify that discrimination against workers for any reason will not be tolerated and must be reported.

Incentive programs

- Modify worker incentive programs to ensure workers stay home when they are sick to protect others working at the facility.
- Communicate clearly that workers will not face adverse consequences for staying home when they are sick.

Paid time off (PTO) and sick leave policies

- Allow flexibility on PTO accrual maximums. Allow workers to use PTO if they or someone in their household has symptoms of or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Relax attendance policies during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If a doctor's note is required to be absent from work, don't require employees to have a doctor's note in advance of approving an absence.

Medical assistance

- Waive co-pays on medical appointments for COVID-19 related treatment.
- Provide access to medical professionals, including tele-medicine options, if an on-site nurse is not available.
- Waive the five-day waiting period for short-term disability benefits for workers who are sick with COVID-19.

Isolation

- Workers showing symptoms of the COVID-19 virus must be isolated from other workers.
- Human resources should help arrange for sick workers to return home.

Other support services

Offer worker assistance services to deal with added stresses and financial impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Packinghouse Workers Bill of Rights law, Minnesota Statutes 179.86, requires employers to provide workers a safe workplace and the equipment necessary to safely perform their work. Visible leadership that promotes a company culture of caring for workers and the community helps to reinforce a company's efforts to promote workplace safety and protect workers.

If you provide housing, ill persons must be separated from well persons

- Discuss grouping options available for the operation. Ideally, each ill person should have a private room and a dedicated bathroom. If this is not feasible and there is more than one ill worker, then 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.
- Separate ill workers with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infections from ill workers with suspect COVID-19.
- **Even if you don't normally provide housing, consider providing temporary housing to ill workers living in households in which self-quarantining is not possible.**
- Provide care to the worker while sick and recovering. Contact your local public health department for assistance with needed services.
- 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), call a healthcare provider.
- If the worker's symptoms are getting worse, call a healthcare provider.
- If the worker has trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, or other emergency signs, call 911.
- Follow CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfection the home or facility.

What can you expect if a worker is laboratory-confirmed with COVID-19?

- For laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will call the ill worker to interview them. They may make recommendations about high-risk contacts of the infected person to stay at home (self-quarantine) for 14 days.

When can an ill worker return to work?

- The ill person should stay at home and, if possible, have their own room and bathroom to reduce risk 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 seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND,
  - At least three days have passed since fever has gone (without use of fever reducing medications).

What about co-workers of ill workers when there has not been a positive lab test?

- Co-workers (not part of an official MDH quarantine or a facility quarantine) can report to work as long as they are symptom-free. They will have to carefully follow the health and safety guidelines you have developed for the facility. See above discussion of health screening, temperature checks and use of masks.