

Protect Worker Safety and Your Farm During COVID-19

Prevent, prepare, educate and communicate

America's pig farms join with their fellow food producers and distributors in playing a key role during the current COVID-19 pandemic. As part of one of 16 sectors deemed as essential, pork producers are working to ensure the nation's food supply remains intact. This means taking steps to ensure that your farm employees stay healthy.

"To provide continuity, every farm needs to do its part, and that includes doing what's in the best interest for the health of employees, their families and their communities," said Heather Fowler, director of public health for the National Pork Board. "It is vital to find ways to reduce employees' exposure to COVID-19 and to take appropriate steps if an employee would become ill."

While you can't completely eliminate the risk of becoming ill from the virus that causes COVID-19, taking these steps will help lower the risk to you and your employees.



On-Farm Prevention/Preparation

1 Double-down on biosecurity. Ensure all employees adhere to your farm's biosecurity measures. Stress the critical role measures such as showering in/showering out play and the potential fallout if not followed.



5 Ways to Keep People and Pigs Healthy

With all of the health challenges today, such as influenza and COVID-19, it is more important than ever to focus on protecting farm personnel and the animals in their care. Keeping people and pigs healthy is a key focus of the pork industry's "We Care" ethical principles. Here are five recommendations to achieve that goal.

- 1. Limit Farm Visitors and Access to Swine Barns**
 - Don't allow unauthorized visitors. (No visitors advised during the COVID-19 pandemic.)
 - Limit entry to operations and essential service personnel.
 - Don't allow anyone exhibiting signs of respiratory illness to enter. If you allow visitors, ask if they have had any recent contact with others who have signs of illness.
 - Follow your farm's shower-in/shower-out policy.
 - Wear farm-specific clothing and footwear.
- 2. Wash Your Hands Often**
 - Wash your hands and arms frequently with soap and water to avoid spreading germs.
 - Wash hands before and after handling pigs, eating, using the restroom, and smoking, as well as before touching your face, mouth, eyes or nose.
 - To help kill germs, wash with warm water. If possible, apply soap, lather for 30 seconds, scrub all surfaces and rinse under running water.
 - Use an alcohol-based (60% or more) hand sanitizer if soap and clean water are not available.
- 3. Stay Home if You Are Sick**
 - Follow your farm's sick-leave policy if you develop signs and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough, body aches, fatigue, shortness of breath, vomiting and diarrhea.
 - Even without a formal diagnosis, do not enter swine facilities for at least seven days after developing signs of respiratory illness, even mild signs.
 - Seek medical care if needed.
 - If diagnosed with influenza, don't enter swine facilities until fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - For COVID-19, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has both a test and a non-test strategy for lifting isolation and returning to work. Go to: cdc.gov/coronavirus
- 4. Follow Biosecurity Practices to Protect Pig Health**
 - Keep food and drink out of animal areas. (A no-pig policy is recommended.)
 - Properly adjust and maintain ventilation to minimize co-mingling of air inside animal housing facilities to reduce the exposure of pigs to viruses from other pigs and to reduce their exposure to human influenza viruses.
 - Prevent the introduction of birds into swine facilities. Avoid contact with birds and bird droppings in general, and avoid use of non-chlorinated surface water.
 - Use personal protective equipment in barns.
 - Follow recommendations for yearly vaccinations against the seasonal influenza virus.
 - Review herd health programs with a veterinarian to ensure they are up-to-date and effective for conditions on the farm.
- 5. Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help**
 - Health issues can take a toll on mental well-being, but there are many available resources that can help. Contact the National Pork Producers Council, the National Pork Health Board, the Virginia-Missouri Agricultural Safety and Health Center at the University of Minnesota, Colorado State University Extension and Iowa State University Extension.

Will gock.org or call (800) 456-7875 for more information.

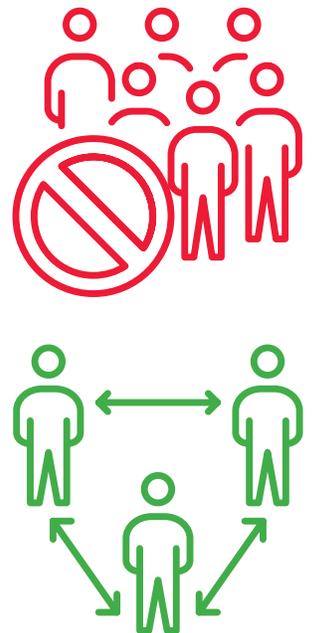


2 Say no to visitors. Allowing farm visitors during the COVID-19 crisis is not recommended, so limit entry to caretakers and essential service personnel. If there is a need for someone to visit, ask if they've had contact with anyone expected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Don't allow anyone on the farm who is exhibiting an illness.

Order these biosecurity signs for your farm by searching for inventory number 09075 (limit two per order) at porkstore.pork.org.

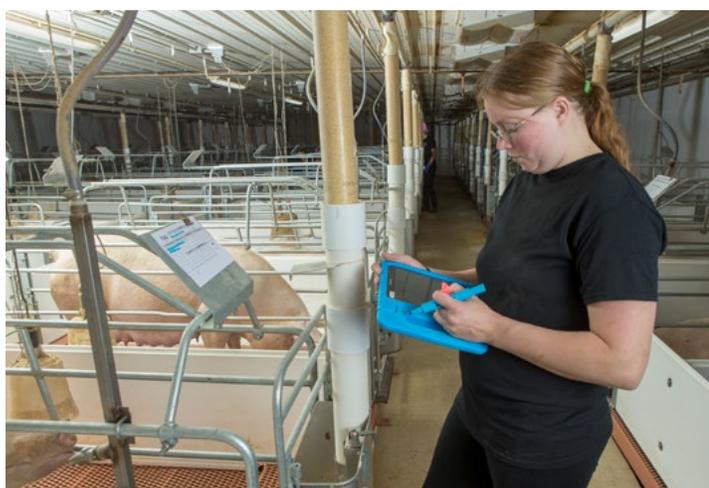


3 Practice social distancing. Limit having employees congregate in the same air space, such as hallways, the shower area or the breakroom. Stagger start times, lunch breaks and shifts. Re-evaluate tasks that require multiple people to be in close proximity and keep meetings small, with 6 feet or more between participants. Use conference calls, texts, email or on-site message boards to get work done successfully with less face-to-face time. Cloth face coverings are suggested when social distancing is not possible.





4 Step up cleaning. Regularly clean and disinfect common spaces and high-touch surfaces, such as the breakroom table and doorknobs. Do not share towels, kitchen utensils, pens or work tools. Follow your farm's established procedures to disinfect and bring in personal objects, such as phones and lunch boxes, as allowed. A list of effective disinfectants is available through the [EPA](#) by searching for the EPA registration number on the label. Your farm's hygiene and sanitation program may need a detailed standard operating procedure (SOP).



5 Have a plan. Each employee plays a role in your farm's success. As such, it's important to have a contingency plan in place to care for animals in case a worker is ill.



Know what each employee is responsible for in the day-to-day operations, including any necessary payments, reporting and purchasing that would need to be done in their absence.

6 Practice good hand hygiene. Encourage all farm personnel to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds to avoid the possible spread of COVID-19. If soap and clean water are not available in an area, provide alcohol-based (60% or higher) sanitizer.

Best practices for washing your hands*



Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap and apply soap.



Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and nails.



Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the *Happy Birthday* song twice.



Rinse hands well under clean, running water.

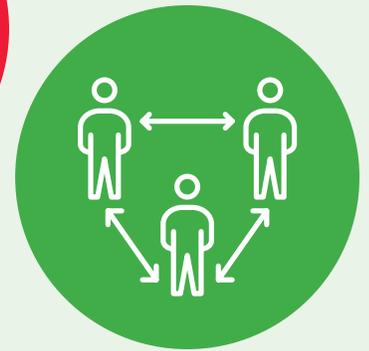


Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

*Handwashing graphics provided by CDC. CS310027-A

At-Home Precautions

- 1 Follow social-distancing guidelines.** Stress to employees that social distancing also is important at home and can directly impact employee health on the farm. Remind farm personnel to follow recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and as established by state officials. To find state orders, visit: pork.org/covid-19.



- 2 Limit interactions.** All farm personnel should avoid travel and limit trips to essential locations, such as to grocery stores and pharmacies. Avoid carpooling or limit doing so to essential situations. Follow face-mask or covering recommendations in your state.



- 3 Focus on hand hygiene.** Just as at work, employees should wash their hands often with soap and water when at home and after being in public places, such as a grocery store. Clean and disinfect tables, light switches, phones, countertops and other frequently touched surfaces.



Symptoms, Diagnosis



1 Monitor your health. During this pandemic, all employees should monitor their own health. CDC recommends ensuring sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance.

2 Know the symptoms. People with COVID-19 have experienced a wide range of symptoms, with mild to severe cases. According to CDC, these symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus:

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing**
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

3 Stay home if sick. Do not allow sick employees to come to work because they may make other workers ill. If they become sick at work, have them return home immediately. Employees who are ill or who have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their supervisor. They also should contact their healthcare provider or state health department.

4 Returning to work after being ill with COVID-19. Most people have a mild illness and are able to recover at home, according to CDC. Here are CDC guidelines for lifting home isolation.

- **Employees who have been ill with COVID-19** – Employees can return to work if it has been at least seven days since the onset of their disease, they have been fever-free for at least three days without the use of fever-reducing medication and they are free of any symptoms of disease. Alternatively, with improving signs, resolution of a fever and two negative tests 24 hours apart, isolation also can be lifted. This test-based strategy approach is dependent on the availability of test kits.
- **Employees with lab-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms** – Employees may discontinue isolation after at least seven days since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test with no subsequent illness provided they remain asymptomatic. For three days following discontinuation of isolation, they should continue to limit contact (stay 6 feet away from others) and limit the potential to disperse respiratory secretions by wearing a covering for their nose and mouth when other people are present. In community settings, the covering may be a barrier mask, such as a bandanna, scarf or cloth mask.

Screening Employees for COVID-19

To ensure the ongoing safety of the pork industry workforce, some employers have moved to screening employees when they arrive at the farm using guidance from the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC). The EEOC has provided guidance in a publication, *Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans With Disabilities Act*, to help employers implement strategies to navigate the impact of COVID-19 in the workplace. Updated on March 19, it addresses examples and information regarding COVID-19, with new 2020 information appearing in bold.

According to EEOC, the following steps may be used to identify employees who are potentially positive for COVID-19 based on the most common signs of the disease. Employers should be aware that some people with COVID-19 do not have a fever.



Measuring Body Temperature and Conducting a Symptom Check

1. Body Temperature

According to [the Mayo Clinic](#), multiple types of thermometers (infrared gun, digital, oral or aural) are available for use. Select a thermometer type that works best for your farm and employees. Remember to refer to the manufacturer's directions for proper use.

The following tips include those recommended within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [CARE Kit](#). It was developed for travelers, but contains good information about taking temperatures:

- Fever is defined as 100.4 F or higher. Keep in mind that there is some evidence to suggest that not everyone with COVID-19 will have a fever.
- Before taking a temperature, it is recommended to wait 30 minutes after eating, drinking, working or exercising.
- Note that some medications can lower body temperatures.
- This is a medical examination, so results need to be kept confidential.

2. Symptom Check

According to EEOC's [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act and Other EEO Laws](#), while taking temperatures, you also may consider asking employees about their current signs/symptoms of illness. Respiratory signs, such as a cough and shortness of breath, are most commonly associated with COVID-19.

If an employee reports respiratory signs or has a fever verified by the temperature check, send them home and encourage them to contact their healthcare provider for medical advice and next steps. Employers may also consider reaching out to their [state public health veterinarian](#) or [local health department](#) for assistance in determining next steps, including whether to apply or lift quarantine/isolation requirements as outlined in the CDC's [Ending Home Isolation](#) guidance.

Screening should take place prior to entry on the farm or through self-reporting. Use what makes sense for your facility and farm's biosecurity practices. The following are adapted from the [Practical biosecurity recommendations to prevent COVID-19 in farm workers and allied operations](#), made available by the Swine Disease Eradication Center at the University of Minnesota.

- Designate an area where employees wait to be screened, either through a drive-up or before entering the farm or facility.
- Stagger the arrival of employees to enable social distancing.
- Employees also may self-report their temperature and signs to their employer prior to their onsite arrival.

Offer Assistance to Employees

Health issues can take a toll on mental well-being, but there are many available resources where you can point employees. These include: AgriSafe Network, Rural Mental Health Hub, the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center at the University of Minnesota, Colorado State University Extension and Iowa State University Extension.

References:

CDC Workplace:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

CDC Guidance on Returning to Work:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

Essential Workers:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/critical-workers-implementing-safety-practices.pdf>

COVID Prevention All:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fprevention.html

On-Farm Suggestions (UMN)

https://vetmed.umn.edu/sites/vetmed.umn.edu/files/covid19_and_barn_recommendations.pdf
vetmed.umn.edu/centers-programs/swine-program/research/covid-19-resources-swine-industry

EPA Disinfectants:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

EEOC:

https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/newsroom/wysk/wysk_ada_rehabilitaion_act_coronavirus.cfm

Mental Health Resource:

<http://umash.umn.edu/stress/>

If you have further questions please refer to pork.org/COVID-19 or call the Pork Checkoff Service Center at (800) 456-7675



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