MAINTAINING A HEALTHY WORKPLACE AND ADDRESSING AN EMPLOYEE FOUND TO HAVE COVID-19

The following is a compilation of the best available information on how an employer can provide a safe work environment and steps to be taken if an employee is found to have COVID-19 or show symptoms. The information in this document has been obtained from the websites for the Ohio Department of Health, OSHA, USDA, the FDA, and the CDC. Links are included in the sections to the pertinent guidance.   This document is not to be construed as legal advice and is solely for informational purposes.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL INFORMATION FOR BUSINESS OWNERS
The following is from the CDC website (click here).

Maintain Healthy Business Operations
Identify a workplace coordinator who will be responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact at the workplace.

Maintain A Healthy Work Environment
Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:
- Increase ventilation rates.
- Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection:
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
    - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
    - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available here. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. To disinfect, use products that meet EPA's criteria (also linked above) for use against COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

Advise employees before traveling to take additional preparations:
- Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
- If outside the United States, sick employees should follow company policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.

Reduce Transmission Among Employees

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:
- Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees should not return to work until the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow CDC recommended precautions.

IF YOU HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHO HAS OR HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID 19

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work:
- See OSHA's COVID-19 guidance document for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and guidance for employers (click here), including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at higher risk for serious illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.

Separate sick employees:
- Employees who appear to have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).

Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after confirmed case has been in the facility (from the CDC Website):
- If a sick employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the CDC cleaning and disinfection recommendations.
  (From the CDC website linked above)-
    - Close off areas visited by the ill persons. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.

    - **Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines used by the ill persons**, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces**.**

How to Clean and Disinfect

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
    - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available here (also previously linked). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc.
    - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000 ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia

or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
  - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
  - If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
    - Otherwise, use products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 (previously linked) and that are suitable for porous surfaces

Electronics

- For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines, remove visible contamination if present.
  - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
  - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
  - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry
In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.

- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

For Cleaning Crews:

The risk of exposure to cleaning staff is inherently low. Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.

- ○ Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
- ○ Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- ○ Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to **clean** hands after removing gloves.
- ○ If gowns are not available, coveralls, aprons or work uniforms can be worn during cleaning and disinfecting. Reuseable (washable) clothing should be laundered afterwards. Clean hands after handling dirty laundry.

Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE such as a tear in gloves or any other potential exposures to their supervisor.

Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

FURTHER INFORMATION/GUIDANCE FOR FOOD FACILITY OPERATIONS
Food facilities, like other work establishments, need to follow protocols set by local and state health departments, which may vary depending on the amount of community spread of COVID-19 in a particular area. We encourage coordination with local health officials for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside. *USDA COVID 19 Website*

FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) and many have food safety plans that include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls. CGMPs and food safety plans have requirements for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food.

- ● Food facilities are required to use EPA-registered "sanitizer" products in their cleaning and sanitizing practices.

- In addition, there is a [list of EPA-registered "disinfectant"](#) (also previously linked) products for COVID-19 (also linked previously) that have qualified under EPA's [emerging viral pathogen program](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.
- IMPORTANT: Check the product label guidelines for if and where these disinfectant products are safe and recommended for use in food manufacturing areas or food establishments.
- The FDA encourages coordination with [local](#) health officials for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside.
- Food facilities may want to consider a more frequent cleaning schedule.

For more information visit [FDA's website on Food Safety and the Coronavirus](#) FAQ

How will USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service ("FSIS")-regulated establishments handle cleanup if cases have been identified at the facility?

Coronaviruses are enveloped viruses, meaning they are one of the easiest types of viruses to kill with the appropriate disinfectant product. All FSIS-regulated establishments are required to have Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (Sanitation SOP), which are written procedures that an establishment develops and implements to prevent direct contamination or adulteration of product. It is the establishment's responsibility to implement the procedures as written in the Sanitation SOPs. The establishment must maintain daily records sufficient to document the implementation and monitoring of the Sanitation SOPs and any corrective action taken. FSIS verifies that regulated establishments adhere to the procedures in place. The same sanitary procedures that establishments are already following to protect food safety will also help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19. *[USDA COVID 19 Website](#)*

Employee Information from Cornell University Extension
Farmers also need to ensure they are advising their employees of best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Provide guidance to help employees clean and disinfect employer-provided housing. Follow up with employees and manage the process to be sure that this happens. Set up a regular weekly and daily schedule for cleaning.
  - CDC guidance for cleaning homes: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html
- Provide cleaning supplies such as cleaning solutions, buckets, mops, brushes, etc for cleaning at work and for those living in employer-provided housing. (CDC list of approved antimicrobial cleaning products: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf)

- Communicate with employees that they should stay home if they are sick. Employees sometimes come to work believing they will face punishment or firing if they miss work. Be sure your employees understand that their health and that of their co-workers' comes first. Communicate and make a plan to cover for sick employees. CDC provides posters in English and Spanish covering symptoms of novel coronavirus.

This information and more tips for Novel Coronavirus Prevention & Control for Farms can be found at

https://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/2020/03/12/novel-coronavirus-prevention-control-for-farms/