

# AGRICULTURAL COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS

## GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR ALL WORKSITES AND WORK-RELATED FUNCTIONS

- (a) **Applicability.** These requirements apply to orchards, fields, dairies, and all other operations expressly identified in WAC 296-307-006; all fruit- and vegetable-packing warehouses, whether owned by the grower or producer or not; and employer- or operator-provided transportation and housing. These requirements do not apply to meat or other food processing operations.

These requirements should be read to complement, not supplant WAC 246-358-002 and WAC 296-307-16102, **“Additional requirements to protect occupants in temporary worker housing from 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) exposure.”**

To the extent these requirements give rise to conflicting language by imposing additional requirements beyond those set forth in administrative rule, these requirements prevail.

- (b) **Definitions.** Consistent with WAC 296-307-009, the following definitions apply:

- (i) **“DOH”** means the Washington Department of Health.
- (ii) **“Employee”** means a person providing personal labor in the business of the employer, including anyone providing personal labor under an independent contract. For purposes of these requirements, employees refer to individuals working in the agricultural industry. “Worker,” when used in the context of housing, is synonymous with “employee.”
- (iii) **“Employer”** means a business entity having one or more employees, as defined above.
- (iv) **“L&I”** means the Washington Department of Labor and Industries.
- (v) **“Personal protective equipment”** (hereinafter “PPE”) means face coverings, masks, respirators, gloves, and any other equipment meant to protect against hazards, including chemicals and COVID-19.
- (vi) **“Shelter group”** means a cohort of no more than fifteen (15) employees living and working together, in accordance with WAC 246-358-002(e) and WAC 296-307-16102(e).
- (vii) **“Temporary worker housing operator”** (hereinafter “housing operator” or “operator”) has the same meaning as WAC 246-358-010(20) and WAC 296-307-16103, i.e., the individual or business holding legal title to the land beneath the housing or having the lawful control or supervision over the property.
- (viii) **“Transportation provider”** means the employer or other individual or business responsible for providing transportation to employees.

- (c) **PPE.** Employers, operators, and providers must supply, at no cost to employees, all PPE mandated by these requirements, including gloves, goggles, face shields, and face masks. PPE must be clean and available each workday.

Cloth facial coverings must be worn by every employee not working alone on the jobsite. If their exposure dictates a higher level of protection, employees must wear the level of PPE set forth in the L&I [guidelines](#) entitled “**Washington Coronavirus Hazard Conditions for Employers – Face Coverings, Masks, and Respirator Choices.**”

Cloth facial coverings are described in the DOH [guidelines](#) entitled “**Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings.**”

Employers, providers, and housing operators must adhere to current PPE rules for safety and health hazards,

- (d) **Physical Distancing.** Employers, providers, and housing operators must ensure physical distancing of six feet or more during all interactions within the scope of employment.

When strict physical distancing is not feasible for a specific task, other prevention measures, such as more protective PPE, barriers, and negative pressure ventilation, are required.

- (e) **Workplace Disinfection.** Employers must ensure that high-touch surfaces are disinfected prior to the start of each workday, and before and after the morning, lunch, and afternoon breaks. For employers with night shifts, the same frequency of disinfecting is required.

Employers will assign and train employees or other designees on the proper methods for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the high-touch surfaces.

Employers must provide appropriate and adequate supplies to meet the demands of routine cleaning and disinfection, and any deep cleaning required by subsection (i) of this section.

- (f) **Handwashing Stations.** Employers, housing operators, and transportation providers must supply adequate handwashing stations at every location and at all times that employees are acting within the scope of their employment.

All handwashing stations must have soap, tepid water, disposable paper towels, and a garbage receptacle. Handwashing stations must comply with WAC 296-307-09515.

Hand sanitizer is not an adequate substitute for a handwashing station. Hand sanitizer must instead be provided at high-traffic and other strategic locations, e.g., vehicles used to transport workers, where a handwashing station is impractical.

(g) **Use of Handwashing Stations.** Employers must put in place adequate measures to ensure, at a minimum, that employees wash their hands for more than twenty (20) seconds at the following intervals:

- (i) Upon arriving at the worksite;
- (ii) Prior to the first rest break;
- (iii) Prior to the lunch break;
- (iv) After using the restroom;
- (v) Following the lunch break; and
- (vi) Prior to leaving the worksite and the end of the day.

(h) **Educational Materials and Training.** Employers must provide adequate educational materials, including workplace posters, and training to educate employees about the risks of COVID-19 and the required safety protocols. All educational materials must be provided in the language or languages the employees understand. The entire curriculum must be provided to new employees. Training on any *new* COVID-19 health and safety rules issued by federal, state, or local authorities relating to agricultural work must be refreshed following issuance.

At a minimum, educational materials and training must convey:

- (i) The importance of and method for handwashing and avoiding touching an individual's mouth, nose, and eyes;
- (ii) How to recognize the signs, symptoms, and risk factors associated with COVID-19;
- (iii) The current CDC, DOH, and L&I guidelines on how to prevent the spread of the virus;
- (iv) The proper use of protective equipment, including how to safely put on and take off masks and other face coverings;
- (v) Proper respiratory etiquette;
- (vi) The importance of and method for promptly disinfecting frequently touched items;
- (vii) The steps taken in the workplace to promote COVID-19 health and safety;
- (viii) How to file a workplace complaint, providing information that, at a minimum, makes clear the process for contacting L&I's Division of Occupational Safety

and Health, including the telephone number and a statement that complaints can be made anonymously;

(ix) The contents of the employer's COVID-19 Response Plan required under subsection (i), below;

(x) How to file for medical sick leave, paid sick leave, and/or workers compensation. Any employer believing to be exempt from the 500-employee cap in the Family First Coronavirus Response Act must make clear to employees their belief that the exemption applies. Employers making this disclosure should also clarify whether they are providing alternate relief.

(i) **COVID-19 Response Plan.** Employers are required to document and maintain a COVID-19 Response Plan. As per section (h)(ix), above, the plan must be made available to all employees in the language or languages the employees understand and must, at a minimum, provide for:

(i) The immediate shutdown, deep cleaning, and disinfecting of all areas where a symptomatic employee was present;

(ii) Immediate notice to employees who worked in close proximity of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 of possible exposure;

(iii) Informing employees of their rights to secure compensation during any resulting quarantine period, including paid sick leave and the additional information required of exempt employers under subsection (h)(ix) above;

(iv) Assurance that ill employees stay home or remain isolated in housing, or leave the worksite if feeling or appearing ill;

(v) Immediately informing the relevant county health department of any employees testing positive for COVID-19 or sent to quarantine for possible exposure to the virus. The report shall include the grower's name, exact field location, and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of impacted employees.

(j) At the beginning of each day, employers must conduct a temperature check and review the symptom checklist with employees concerning themselves and their households. All thermometers must be properly sanitized between each use or each day. Any worker with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher is considered to have a fever.

(k) **Testing.** To the extent feasible, employers must ensure timely access to COVID-19 tests for symptomatic employees and must provide transportation as needed. Employers must designate a person or persons who will be readily identifiable as the testing facilitators.

(l) **Best Practices.** Employers must keep up-to-date with guidance issued by the CDC, L&I,

and DOH. To the extent feasible, employers should make every effort to implement any and all best practices to further protect employees. Specific guidance for the agricultural industry is found [here](#) and [here](#). If any permissive provision contained in the linked agricultural industry guidelines contradict the requirements of this document, “**Agricultural COVID-19 Requirements**,” this document controls.

Housing operators electing the “group shelter” option under WAC 246-358-002(e) and WAC 296-307-16102(e) should take extra measures to facilitate, e.g., grocery delivery and internet access to limit the opportunities for physical interaction with non-group members.

- (m) **Employee Rights.** An employee may refuse to perform unsafe work, including work made unsafe by COVID-19 hazards. It is unlawful for an employer to take adverse action against an employee who has engaged in safety-protected activities under the law if the individual’s work refusal meets certain legal requirements. More details are found here: [Safety and Health Discrimination in the Workplace brochure](#) (F417-244-000) / [Spanish Safety & Health Discrimination brochure](#) (F417-244-999).

Employees who choose to remove themselves from a worksite because they do not believe it is safe to work due to the risk of COVID-19 exposure may have access to certain leave or unemployment benefits.

Employers must provide high-risk individuals covered by Proclamation 20-46 with their choice of access to available employer-granted accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work arrangement is not feasible. Other employees may have access to expanded family and medical leave included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, unemployment benefits, or paid time off, depending on the circumstances. Additional information is available at <https://www.lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/paid-sick-leave-and-coronavirus-covid-19-common-questions>.

- (n) Comply with all requirements of chapter 246-101 WAC and any orders issued under the authority of the local health jurisdiction.

## OUTDOOR WORKSITES

### (1) General Requirements

- (a) **Applicability.** For purposes of this section, “outdoor worksites” includes orchards, vineyards, fields, and other substantially similar workplaces.
- (b) **Handwashing Stations.** In accordance with WAC 296-307-09515, handwashing stations must be placed no further than “one-quarter mile of each employee’s worksite in the field.” Additional portable handwashing stations meeting the requirements of **General Provisions**, subsection (f), must be placed within one hundred and ten (110) yards of employees at all times. The limited exception contained in **General Provisions**, subsection (f), does not apply for purposes of this subsection.

- (c) Employers must ensure that tools, implements, and other equipment not be shared without being fully wipe-sanitized between uses.

**(2) Special Requirements for Providers When an Employer or Temporary Worker Housing Supplier Makes the WAC 246-358-002(e)/296-307-16102(e) “Group Shelter” Election**

- (a) Employers must ensure that shelter groups adhere to the requirements of subsections (1)(b) and (c) under **Outdoor Worksites** and the remainder of this section.
- (b) Shelter groups working at the same outdoor worksite must not, under any circumstances, commingle with others outside of the group. Additional precautions, including flexible scheduling, increased physical distancing beyond six feet, administrative controls, and/or physical barriers, may be needed to ensure compliance with this subsection.
- (c) If a shelter group consists of employees from more than one employer and/or worksite, members of the shelter group may work at different sites as long as they only work alongside others in their group.
- (d) Supervisors may supervise multiple shelter groups at one time. Supervisors must comply with the all requirements of this section, ensuring no proximate interaction with members of any shelter group.

**INDOOR WORKSITES**

**(1) General Requirements**

- (a) **Applicability.** For purposes of this section, “indoor worksites” includes dairies and other operations expressly identified in WAC 296-307-006 and conducted in an enclosed setting, and all fruit- and vegetable-packing warehouses, whether owned by the grower or producer or not.
- (b) **Physical Distancing.** Employers are required to implement a physical distancing plan. The plan must set forth the ways in which a minimum of six feet of distancing will be achieved in all circumstances. For specific tasks where six feet of distance is not feasible, the following must be evident in the plan and in place at the worksite:
  - (i) Physical barriers and, if necessary, negative pressure ventilation;
  - (ii) The higher level of protective PPE described in the “**Washington Coronavirus Hazard Conditions for Employers;**” and
  - (iii) Sufficient administrative controls to reduce interactions in all circumstances where proximity is unnecessary.

- (c) Employers must ensure that tools, implements, and other equipment not be shared without being fully wipe-sanitized between uses.

**(2) Special Requirements for Providers When an Employer or Temporary Worker Housing Supplier Makes the WAC 246-358-002(e)/WAC 296-307-16102(e) “Group Shelter” Election**

- (a) Employers must ensure that shelter groups adhere to the requirements of subsections (1)(b) and (c) under **Indoor Worksites** and the remainder of this section.
- (b) Shelter groups working at the same indoor worksite must not, under any circumstances, commingle with others outside of the group. Additional precautions, including flexible scheduling, increased physical distancing beyond six feet, administrative controls, and/or physical barriers, may be needed to ensure compliance with this subsection.

Employers and housing operators must work to coordinate the arrival, workplace activity, and departure of employees to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Workstations for up to fifteen (15) employees must be partitioned into a separate area and assigned to the individual shelter groups. Anyone from outside of the group must not enter the partitioned area.

- (c) If a shelter group consists of employees from more than one employer and/or worksite, members of the shelter group may work at different sites as long as they only work alongside others in their group.
- (d) Supervisors may supervise multiple shelter groups at one time. Supervisors must comply with the all requirements in this section, ensuring no proximate interaction with members of any shelter group.

**EMPLOYER- AND OPERATOR-PROVIDED TRANSPORTATION**

**(1) General Requirements**

- (a) **Applicability.** The following requirements apply whenever a transportation provider arranges transportation for an employee for any purpose whatsoever, including but not limited to, transportation to and from:
  - (i) Workplaces;
  - (ii) Temporary worker housing; and
  - (iii) Grocery stores, financial institutions, and other locations to conduct personal business.

The following requirements do not apply to employees who commute in their own vehicles. Employees commuting separately must commute only with members of their household.

- (b) Providers must ensure that vehicles are disinfected between each use. Providers will designate and train employees or other designees on the proper methods for thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting the interior of the vehicle, the exterior door handles, and all other high-touch surfaces. Employers must pay employees for the time spent cleaning and disinfecting.
- (c) For vehicles with aisles between seats, providers must ensure that employees are positioned with one employee per side, staggered in an alternating, diagonal arrangement.
- (d) For vehicles with bench seating, providers must not allow more than two employees per bench, seated at opposite ends.
- (e) Employees must wear a face covering, mask, respirator, or other PPE in accordance with the **“Washington Coronavirus Hazard Conditions for Employers.”**
- (f) **Drivers.** Drivers must:
  - (i) Be separated from employees and other passengers by a plastic or plexiglass barrier and
  - (ii) Wear a face covering, mask, respirator, or other PPE in accordance with the **“Washington Coronavirus Hazard Conditions for Employers.”**
- (g) To the extent feasible, windows must be open to promote air circulation.

**(2) Special Requirements for Providers When an Employer or Temporary Worker Housing Supplier Makes the WAC 246-358-002(e)/WAC 296-307-16102(e) “Group Shelter” Election**

- (a) Unless otherwise excepted in this section, shelter groups must adhere to subsections (1)(a) through (f) under **Employer and Operator-Provided Transportation.**
- (b) Under WAC 296-307-16102(e)(iii), the administrators of a group shelter, either the employer or the housing operator, “must ensure that members of each shelter group stay together and separate from other groups, occupants, or workers, including during transportation.”

Except for the driver, a shelter group is not permitted to travel with others in the vehicle. Subsection (1)(e), relating to drivers, applies without exception.

- (c) When transporting a shelter group in a single vehicle, employees of the same group may sit less than six feet if wearing PPE consistent with the **“Washington Coronavirus Hazard Conditions for Employers.”**
- (d) As described in **Indoor Worksites**, subsection (2)(d), and **Outdoor Worksites**, subsection (2)(d), supervisors may supervise more than one shelter group. Supervisors who supervise more than one shelter group are expressly prohibited from travelling with employees on the same vehicle. Supervisors who also serve as the driver are exempt from this prohibition but

must comply with the requirements in subsection (1)(f), above.

- (e) If a shelter group consists of employees from more than one employer and/or worksite, members of the shelter group may commute in different vehicles so long as they only travel with others in their group.

### **(3) Variances**

- (a) A provider may request a temporary variance from the requirements of this section, **Employer- and Operator-Provided Transportation**, when another means of providing equal protection is identified.
- (b) In order to receive a variance under this section, the provider must file a plan with L&I, which has the authority to approve alternatives meeting the standard in subsection (3)(a) above.
- (c) Providers must comply with all provisions of this section while any request for a variance is pending.