



June 23, 2020

To Employers of Farm Operations in the Sudbury & District Area:

COVID-19 outbreak prevention and management on farms is crucial and requires collaboration from all levels of government and agricultural stakeholders. Farm operations are essential to support and sustain the people of Ontario. It is critical that these operations be carried-out in a *COVID-safe* way. Strong measures must be put in place to decrease the risk of transmission of COVID-19 related to temporary workers that are working on farms in the Sudbury & District area.

Given the labor shortages facing many farm operations across Ontario this year, some employers are turning to multiple sources to meet their labor needs. These sources may include but are not limited to: Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), Employment Agencies, and local workers. The integration of these workers on farms creates new risks for COVID-19 transmission that must be effectively mitigated in order to protect the health of everyone.

Given the increasing number of cases of COVID-19 on farms in Ontario, Public Health Sudbury & Districts has the following expectations for all farm operations in our service area, to protect their workers as well as the broader public, and decrease the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

All Employers of workers are to take the following actions before workers begin on the farm. These are in addition to requirements under the Quarantine Act:

- Ensure that all TFWs who have arrived in Canada are [self-isolated](#) for 14 days from the date of arrival in Canada;
- Keep a list of names of all TFWs scheduled to arrive in Canada, their planned date of arrival and a plan for isolation of the workers;
- Ensure TFWs in isolation are kept at a minimum of 2 meters apart from other workers or provide a separate room or alternative accommodation for the TFWs in isolation;
- Ensure that arrangements are made for the provision of food, water, laundry, and cleaning supplies for TFWs who are placed under isolation;
- TFWs under self-isolation for 14 days should notify Public Health Sudbury & Districts if they have any COVID-19 [symptoms](#);
- During the 14-day isolation period, ensure that no TFW works on the farm (where they are under isolation), or any other farm;
- Notify Public Health Sudbury & Districts if the worker(s) needs to leave the farm for ANY reason, during this isolation period, such as to seek medical attention.
- Notify Public Health Sudbury & Districts of new TFW arrivals and discuss further guidance and/or inspections of foreign worker farm housing, as needed.

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All Employers of farm workers including TFWs, local workers and temporary help agency workers are to take the following actions:

- Ensure that accurate and updated contact information for all employees (permanent, temporary, or contract) is available to be produced to Public Health Sudbury & District within 24 hours of request in support of case management and contact tracing requirements; and
- Ensure that workers arriving to work on the farm from any area where there is community transmission have tested negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours prior to entering or beginning work; and
- Conduct daily (as a minimum) active and passive screening of all workers;
- Workers presenting with any symptom compatible with COVID-19, must be rapidly identified, investigated and managed, including ensuring access to testing. Symptomatic workers awaiting test results must be off work and on isolation pending results.
- Ensure that employees that work on farms are assigned to the same team/group/work pod (cohort) that is separated from other individuals and teams. Within the team/work pod, workers maintain a two-meter physical distance from other workers.
- Follow all legislative requirements to protect worker health and safety (Occupational Health and Safety Act), any directions and guidance provided by Public Health Sudbury & Districts, Government of Ontario and Federal Government pertaining to COVID-19.
- Ensure that all employees understand their rights and entitlements, including access to healthcare services and other supports that may be available if a worker becomes sick.

Please review the following resources in order to develop and/or enhance your COVID-19 Safety Plans:
[Government of Canada: Guidance for employers of temporary foreign workers regarding COVID-19](#)
[COVID-19 Guidance: Workplace Outbreaks](#)
[COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations](#)
[Guidance for Temporary Foreign Workers](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services: Guidance on Health and Safety for Agricultural Employers Using Temporary Help During COVID-19 (to be posted online shortly).

In addition, a number of workplace [resources](#) are available on Public Health's website including a number of sector specific [guidelines](#). Should you require additional information, please contact Public Health at 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200) or visit phsd.ca/COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

PS:ldp

cc: Pierrette Desrochers, Agricultural Development Officer, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Gervis Bonnick, Acting District Manager for Sudbury, Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development