

What To Do If Someone Working on Your Farm Tests Positive for COVID-19

If you become aware from your employee that they have tested positive for COVID-19:

Step 1: Collect some background information

Ask the employee, while respecting their right to confidentiality, questions regarding their COVID-19 test result, such as:

- When did symptoms, if any, first start?
- When did you receive a confirmed positive test report?
- When was the last time the individual was at work?
- Where or in what area did the individual work?
- Obtain an initial list of people from the individual that he/she may have come into contact with during his/her time at work.

Step 2: Contact public health

Notify public health to support contact tracing (they may need to information you were able to collect from your worker). <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>

Step 3: Follow public health direction

Guidance is likely to include:

- Informing co-workers who were exposed.
- Having exposed workers self-isolate, self-monitor and report any COVID-like illness.
- Clean and disinfect the affected workplace and equipment. (Note that this normally requires a business to shut down during cleaning. This is **NOT** possible on livestock or poultry farm operation.
- You may need to work with your public health unit to develop a Work Isolation Protocol to protect workers while continuing to look after the animals. (For example: minimal number of staff to run operation, PPE that would include masks, face shields, gloves etc., physical distancing and worker safety issues addressed regarding safe operation of equipment.)

You may also become aware directly from your local public health unit that a worker has tested positive for COVID-19. In this case, follow all instructions from the public health unit as above.

Step 4: Inform any workers who may have been exposed

Recommend exposed workers to take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) and follow the recommendations.

Step 5: Report to Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development

If an employer is advised that a worker has tested positive for COVID-19 due to exposure at the workplace, or that a claim has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), the employer is required to notify [the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#) in writing within four days. Additionally, you must [report any occupationally acquired illnesses to the WSIB](#) within three days of receiving notification of the illness.

Step 6: Who Else Do I Need to Notify?

Have any of these groups been on your farm in the preceding 10 days? Are any scheduled to visit in the coming week?

You must notify all potential contacts.

Marketing board and field reps/auditors

Veterinarians

Processor/grader/hatchery

Feed company

Vaccination crews/ catching crews / haulers /pullet movement / depopulation crews

Barn cleaners/ washers/ set up crews

Manure haulers
Equipment/maintenance suppliers/builders

Determine which groups are truly essential visitors and must come onto the site during the outbreak. These visitors should be made aware of a positive test on the farm and that they need to take appropriate precautions during their visit. Other visitors could have their site visits delayed until after outbreak is declared over.

For Further Information:

Screening:

Workplaces, including farms, **MUST** implement screening for any workers or essential visitors (e.g. veterinarian, equipment repair, etc.) entering the work environment.

Essential visitors **MUST** provide contact information on sign in log as this may be required for contact tracing.

Screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift, or when an essential visitor arrives. At a minimum, the questions in the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces](#) should be used to screen individuals for COVID-19 before they are permitted entry into the workplace (business or organization).

Anyone who does not pass screening should be advised that they should not enter the farm and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario.

Public Health Ontario COVID information:

- <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>
- Ontario Government COVID information: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>
- Implement prevention and control measures on the farm. Resources on screen, cohorting, cleaning and disinfection, use of non-medical masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are available at <http://www.Ontario.ca/covidfarmertoolkit>.
- Update your [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) based on the positive case, including contingency planning for the possibility of employees needing to self-isolate and resulting impact on the farm operations.
- Encourage any employees that have reason to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19 or that have symptoms to take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) and follow the recommendations.

Information contained in this document does not constitute public health or legal advice. Information has been provided by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as well as Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Each situation and farm will have unique factors and must seek guidance from their local public health unit should an outbreak occur.