

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has been notified by the Pennsylvania Department of Health of the COVID-19 issues you are combating at **FACILITY NAME**. **The USDA (IF APPLICABLE) will also be informed about this situation given that your facility is under their regulatory authority.**

At this time implementation of the following risk mitigation strategies are required to inhibit transmission of the virus through your workforce. Increased frequency of cleaning and sanitizing of non-production common areas, utilization of masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE), employee temperature screening, and quarantining those suspected of having close contact with an infected individual are all appropriate counter measures against this virus. Additionally, you must increase social distancing by offering telework arrangements for front office staff, stagger production / shifts to increase spacing between crews, mark floors and hand wash sinks to maintain 6 feet of separation between employees, and install temporary physical barriers (sneeze guards, etc.) against transmission of respiratory droplets where social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained.

Many of these measures are mandatory as outlined in the April 15th, 2020 [Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Public Health Safety Measures for Business Permitted to Maintain In-person Operations](#). Please take time to read and familiarize yourself with these mandatory measures.

Below is an overview of the guidance that has been distributed by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture which you find on the [Department's website](#). The hyperlinks at the end of this email lead to excellent resources to remain up-to-date with best practices throughout this dynamic and evolving pandemic.

The PA Department of Agriculture values the health, safety, and contributions of essential businesses and their employees to ensure a safe and accessible food supply. All essential food production and distribution facilities that choose to continue operations during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency should review and adjust standard operating procedures to reduce risk, protect employees, and minimize potential exposure and transmission of coronavirus.

Operating an essential business does NOT mean business as usual:

- Do not allow symptomatic or ill employees to report for duty
 - Consider temporarily modifying attendance policies and penalties during this Public Health Emergency
 - Send home employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness, fever of 100.4° F or greater, signs of a fever, or any other symptoms
- Utilize skeleton crewing: each additional person on your property or in your business increases risk to the overall workforce
 - Stagger shifts, or schedule a typically 5-day work week over 7 days to reduce personnel onsite
 - Encourage employees to perform any work that can be completed remotely through telework to work from home
- Enforce social distancing
 - Limit person-to-person contact and maintain 6 feet of space between individuals

- Avoid congregating groups in confined areas including time clocks and break rooms
- Enforce mask-wearing by employees and customers
- Reiterate the requirement for and the importance of following GMP protocols
 - Regular hand-washing with warm water and soap for minimum of 20 seconds; avoid touching one's face
 - Routine surface cleaning and sanitizing as well as increased frequency cleaning and sanitizing of common touch points (door handles, touchscreens, etc.)
- Stay informed throughout this dynamic situation by regularly monitoring information resources:
 - [CDC Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
 - [FDA COVID-19 Resources](#)
 - [USDA COVID-19 Resources](#)
 - [Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture COVID-19 Resources](#)

Pennsylvania is home to many life-sustaining businesses and industries; but again, we remind you that does not mean not business as usual. Your workforce is your greatest asset. Please make smart decisions that will allow your life sustaining work to continue without increasing risk.

If you need additional assistance, clarification, or another set of eyes on your plans, please don't hesitate to contact the Department.

Thank you,