



COVID-19 Testing for Farmworkers

A. NEW ARRIVALS FROM OUT OF STATE

One of the biggest threats to the safety of your farm workers is the arrival of a new worker from another state. With Vermont's relatively low rate of infection, an in-state worker is not as high risk but those coming from areas of higher infection rates are. Here are some basic precautions recommended by the Vermont Department of Health to avoid infection spreading through the workers in your farm.

The VDH recommends two tests for out-of-state arrivals. There is no cost to anyone for Covid testing. All Covid testing is free for all patients, insured or not. To schedule a Covid test for new arrivals **who lack their own transportation or would have difficulties navigating the online registration system**, please call Bridges to Health, UVM Extension: 802-503-2301. They will coordinate with you to schedule on-farm testing.

Ideally, the first day testing will happen **on the day of arrival to your farm**. Whenever possible, the worker should be quarantined to their room until test results are received (usually 24h, a maximum of 48h). If the result is negative, the worker can work and be out of their room with precautions, but **should not leave the farm**. The **second test will happen on day seven**. If that test is negative, the worker can be considered part of the farm "pod" and leave the farm as needed.

If it is available, offer quarantined housing for the new arrival until the second test result comes back negative. If this is not possible, ensure the new arrival has his/her own room in the group housing, ideally own bathroom, maintains social distance and wears mask in the home and at work. It is also important to have the new arrival frequently clean and wipe surfaces touched often such as door handles, bathroom sinks, tables, etc. with a disinfectant.

If any COVID symptoms develop, isolation is necessary and the second testing can be done at the farm immediately (not waiting until day 7). To request an on-farm test, please call 802-503-2301.

B. HOUSEHOLDS WITH 5 OR MORE UNRELATED INDIVIDUALS

If there are five or more unrelated individuals in a single housing unit, the Department of Health recommends monthly testing of all household members. This test is free and done at the farm.

Why? To avoid a COVID outbreak on your farm, to protect everyone in the household and on the farm and to prevent and avoid severe cases of COVID.

When? Bridges to Health outreach workers will schedule a monthly visit.

Where? At the home or in a central location on the farm that is accessible to all getting tested.

Participation is important to protect not only worker health but also the health of the farm! An outbreak can be devastating and very taxing on farm owners and workers.

KEY to reducing risk of outbreak on the farm is requiring self-screening by all farm employees

All workers, but particularly new arrivals to the farm should be **self-screening for the symptoms listed below** (any one of them):

- Fever (100.4 F or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If any of the symptoms develops, isolation is necessary and testing should be done at the farm immediately. To request an on-farm test, please **call 802-503-2301**.

If the patient tests positive for Covid-19, he/she needs to be isolated from others. If possible quarantined housing should be used. If not available, to isolate within a household, the person should not leave their room except to use the bathroom. After using it, the patient should disinfect all surfaces that are touched with a bleach solution and paper towels. It should be organized that the person's basic needs are fulfilled, such as receiving food, drink, and possibly over the counter medication for mild symptoms. They should not share common spaces such as kitchen or dining room. Disposable dishes, cups and flatware can be used, or all dishes should be washed with detergent and warm water. Clothes should be washed separately with hot water and detergent.

Also, the well-being of the sick patient should be monitored, if any of the symptoms of a medical emergency such as the listed below appear, they should be taken to the nearest urgent care or emergency center.

- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- Fainting, sudden dizziness or weakness
- Changes in vision
- Confusion or changes in mental status
- Any sudden or severe pain
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Difficulty speaking