

## UPDATE FROM THE OFVGA:

With the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic and the next growing season nearly upon us, it is imperative that growers remain vigilant about doing their part to protect incoming workers and at the same time, limit the spread of the virus. The following information is intended to serve as reminders of steps employers must be taking, as well as resources to support growers in these efforts. Please share with your growers.

All growers are encouraged to have a COVID-19 workplace safety plan in place for their farm.

Information on how to build a plan, and a template that can be used can be found at:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/develop-your-covid-19-workplace-safety-plan>.

Most local Public Health Units have regional requirements. Growers are encouraged to check with their local health unit to ensure they are meeting all requirements for their farm business and taking all steps required to protect their workers. Links to every Ontario health unit can be found here:

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>.

As the second wave of the pandemic progresses and public health guidelines evolve, it is vital growers remain informed on their responsibilities as an employer and a business owner.

## **Information for Arriving Workers**

### **Quarantine Requirements**

The 14 day, non-working and paid quarantine requirement for TFWs entering Canada **remains in effect**.

Employers are required to enable workers to meet the quarantine requirement. The requirements for employers to meet are outlined here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-guidance.html>. Frequently asked questions regarding requirements for entering and quarantine of TFWs, including monetary penalties for noncompliance can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-faq.html>.

### **Transportation for Workers Upon Arrival**

Employers are reminded that precautions must be taken when transporting arriving workers from the airport or from the farm to quarantine housing locations. This includes taking precautions to protect arriving workers from each other and from the driver of the vehicle. Some helpful guidance can be found here: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19\\_Farm\\_Outbreak\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19_Farm_Outbreak_guidance.pdf)

### **ArriveCan App**

As of November 21, 2020, all travellers entering Canada, including Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) will be required to submit contact and quarantine information digitally upon and after entry via the ArriveCAN app or webpage. Information on this requirement can be found here: <https://cpma.us14.list-manage.com/track/click?u=36b9f95f10516851c12b2a40b&id=fadcf0df32&e=b6b14d5e65>.

### **Funding for Mandatory Isolation**

Funding through the Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers Program continues to be available to support employers with quarantined workers. For arrivals in 2020, claims must be

submitted by January 30, 2021. Program details for arrivals in 2021 are expected to be posted soon. Program details can be found here: <https://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/agricultural-programs-and-services/mandatory-isolation-support-for-temporary-foreign-workers-program/?id=1588186409721>.

## **Information for Workers in the Workplace**

### **Ministry of Health: Agriculture health and safety during COVID-19**

MOH has a thorough document to support employers with resources, best practices and information to help keep your workers safe and healthy, and your business in operation, during COVID-19. This resource can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/agriculture-health-and-safety-during-covid-19>.

### **OMAFRA: Agri-Food Sector Workplace Safety Toolkit**

The [Working with farm operators to stop the spread of COVID-19 on farms](#) resource (also known as the Toolkit) is kept up to date by OMAFRA. The resource includes information to support employers as they work to keep workers safe, resources and funding available, and what to do if your farm experiences workers with symptoms, test positive, and in the event of an outbreak.

### **REMINDER: Active Screening Requirement**

Employers must actively screen every worker before they enter the workplace at the start of their shift as described in the instructions issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health:

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/workplace\\_screening\\_tool\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/workplace_screening_tool_guidance.pdf).

- Active screening may be done in person at the workplace or remotely using telephone, internet (online), email submission or an app prior to entry.
- Actively screen each person entering the workplace for work purposes, including workers, volunteers, suppliers and contractors.
- Screening should occur before or when the person arrives at the workplace at the beginning of their shift or visit.
- Use the [COVID-19 screening tool for workplaces](#) or ensure that your screening process includes all the questions from the screening tool.
- A screener should advise anyone who does not pass the screening:
  - that they may not enter the workplace, including any outdoor, or partially outdoor, workplaces
  - to go home to self-isolate immediately
  - to contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1-866-797-0000) to find out if they need a COVID-19 test and for further instructions
- Make sure screeners receive information and instruction on how to perform this work safely and what to do if a person must be excluded from the workplace.

## **Funding Available**

### **Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Protection Program**

Funding for projects that lead to increased protections for farm workers continues to be available through the Enhanced Agri-Food Workplace Program. There are two different program guides available, depending on the size and type of project being undertaken:

**On-Farm Worker Safety Improvement Program:** Larger project funding (60% funding up to 100K per business/property for projects over \$15,000)

Program Guide: [http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogram\\_guide3.htm#cost](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogram_guide3.htm#cost)

Application Form: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogramfwsipdf>

**Occupational Health and Safety Measures:** Projects to implement preventative health and safety measures (now up to \$15,000 from previous \$7,500)

Program Guide: [http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogram\\_guide1-2.htm](http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogram_guide1-2.htm)

Application form: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogramohsm.pdf>

**Supports for extraordinary costs resulting from employees that test positive for COVID-19:**

The Enhanced Agri-food Workplace Protection Program also provides funding support to eligible employers faced with extraordinary costs related to worker isolation and employee wage supports due to a positive COVID-19 test result.

More information: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/about/agrifoodprogramwwie.pdf>

**WSPS Funded Consulting and Training**

Under this program, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is providing funding to Workplace Safety and Prevention Services to help farmers and other agri-food businesses provide safe workplace, and improve effective management of the risk of COVID-19 for:

- Provincially regulated abattoirs and meat processing facilities
- Agricultural producer operations such as farm, greenhouses and horticultural production operations, livestock production operations and field/cash crop production.

WSPS can help you understand the risks of COVID-19, improve management of the risks for farm operations and build capacity for the future through:

- A pandemic recovery toolkit with measures and controls to manage COVID-19 risks
- Awareness sessions specific to the subsector
- Assistance in completing a pandemic response checklist
- Conducting a pandemic response program gap analysis including an associated facility walkthrough and provision of a summary report
- Preparing pandemic response procedures customized for the business including training
- Conducting a pandemic response program audit including a summary report

Call 1-877-494-9777 to speak with a customer service representative or visit

<https://www.wspss.ca/Farm-Safety-Products/Seguridad-Agricola-Agricultural-Safety.aspx> to learn more about these services.