COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines
AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

WorkSafe TASMANIA

Purpose

The COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines set out what employers should do as they continue, or seek to resume, business operations. By following these guidelines you will be able to show how you will comply with minimum standards determined by Public Health, and with the requirements of the Work Health and Safety Act. This will help keep your workers and others safe from COVID-19. Workplaces that do not show compliance with the standards may be subject to enforcement actions.

About the agriculture industry

The agriculture industry involves production activities. This means both the growing and cultivation of horticultural and other crops, and the controlled breeding, raising, or farming of animals.

These Guidelines are intended for workplaces that range from small to medium sized family farms to large commercial agricultural enterprises, and may include grazing areas, fields for growing crops, or dairy farms. Farms can be both workplaces and homes for some families.

A hobby farm is a small holding or small farm that is maintained without the expectation of being a primary source of income. If you operate a farm and you have volunteers, employ or contract anybody to do some work on your property, your property is considered a workplace and these Guidelines apply.

People accessing or visiting farming workplaces for the purposes of commercial or recreational hunting or fishing as well as beekeepers and pollinators should comply with the COVID 19 Safety Plan (or similar farm safety management plan) as determined by the property owner or farm manager.

Agricultural workplaces which are involved in processing, retail sales, farm accommodation, commercial hunting or fishing and agritourism operations should also refer to the relevant
COVID Safe Workplace Guidelines for:

- Hospitality
- Food Processing and Manufacturing
- Retail
- Tourism.

How to comply with the new standards

Businesses must implement measures to achieve the minimum standards and must also document these measures.

You will need to do a risk assessment to decide which control measures are most suited to your industry and business. You will need to take into account the level of risk of the virus spreading that exists at the time. On the following pages are **examples** of control measures that will help you meet each new standard.

- ► Template and example COVID-19 risk register (Safe Work Australia): a template for doing a risk assessment.

Managing other risks

You must manage other risks associated with COVID19. These include:

- ► the risks to health and safety of workers doing unfamiliar tasks. Consult with these workers about their skills, training needs and workloads before they start new work
- ► the risks to mental health of workers due to the pandemic. Offer information and support, including counselling through an employee assistance program, a supportive workplace culture, or external service providers such as Lifeline or Beyond Blue.

Checklists and templates

A COVID-19 Safety Plan is a great way for businesses to document measures and show how they are keeping their customers, their workers and the community safe.

These templates and checklist will help you develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

- ► COVID-19 Workplace Checklist: Use this checklist to keep your workers and others safe at the workplace and limit the spread of COVID-19. It covers working from home, physical distancing, handwashing/hygiene, cleaning and more. Update it on a regular basis.
- ► COVID-19 Safety Plan small business template
- ► COVID-19 Safety Plan medium business template: Use these templates to show how you are planning to manage any risks arising from restarting your small or medium business.

WorkSafe Tasmania
Department of Justice

Tasmanian Government

Other resources that may assist you in completing your COVID-19 Safety Plan include:

► Safe Work Australia agriculture industry information for COVID-19

► COVIDSafe Planning tool (National COVID-19 Coordination Commission): online planning tool to help you keep your workers, customers and the community safe.

► Pandemic Plan Advice (WorkSafe Tasmania): includes planning, communication and consultation, risk management, and general control measures.

► How to clean and disinfect your workplace (Safe Work Australia): explains products to use and how to clean items specific to retail, such as cash registers and EFTPOS machines.

► Safe Work Australia COVID-19 Resource Kit: includes checklists for:
- Cleaning
- Physical distancing
- Health, hygiene and facilities
- and Printable signage.

► National Farmers Federation COVID-19 workplace guide: basic advice on managing the impacts on farming workplaces including industrial relations considerations. One of the biggest impacts on a farming business is access to labour and managing risks posed by seasonal workers (including temporary visa holders) during harvest. Pages 5-7 of this guide provide general steps and principles for engaging labour hire workers or contractors, travelling to/from the workplace and accommodation of workers.

► Guidance: Information for Farmers - Agricultural Contractors and Visitors: can help you determine if it is safe for a contractor, field officer, agronomist, consultant or visitor to enter your farm.

► Farmpoint phone 1300 292 292 and the DPIPWE website provides COVID-19 help for agricultural businesses including industry-specific links to practical information and resources to help you manage COVID-19.

► Tasmanian Government Advice on gatherings Check this site regularly, as the numbers permitted to attend gatherings will change as the three recovery stages are worked through.

When you undertake your business activities. they must be consistent with the Public Health directives at that time.

► For employers or workers that need language help, phone 13 14 50 or the hearing and speech assistance helpline 1300 555 727.

Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:
1. Managing risks to health and safety	An employer must manage the risk of a person contracting or spreading COVID-19 disease: a. in the workplace; or b. in connection with the conduct of the business or undertaking. The employer must identify and manage the risks that may contribute to a person contracting or spreading COVID-19 In managing the risks, the employer must take into account information that is published and accessible by the employer about: • a duty or obligation imposed under the WHS Act, the Public Health Act or Emergency Management Act • relevant information, recommendations or guidance materials published or specified by a public authority, an equivalent Commonwealth authority, or a relevant industry body, in relation to COVID-19 • the nature of the work being performed • the nature of the industry in which the work is being performed • the environmental conditions of the workplace, such as design, layout or systems of work, which may increase a person's exposure to COVID-19. The above information needs to be considered when: 1. implementing the controls, and 2. reviewing and adjusting the controls: It is expected that agricultural businesses (including farms) will need to manage the impacts of COVID19 and show they comply with these regulations for the foreseeable future. 3. Consider these Guidelines and implement the actions in a manner that works best for your business or farm	It is expected that agricultural businesses (including farms) will need to manage the impacts of COVID19 and show they comply with these minimum standards for the foreseeable future. Consider these Guidelines and implement the actions in a manner that works best for your business or farm In managing risks, you must seek to eliminate the risk first, as far as is reasonably practicable. If you can't eliminate it, you must minimise the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. Apply the hierarchy of controls using the highest level of control that is reasonably practicable. You many need a combination of controls. Eliminating the risk is the best option, followed by substitution, then isolation and engineering controls. If the above can't be achieved, then reduce the risk through administrative controls. Reducing the risk by using personal protective equipment (PPE) is the lowest level of control. Maintain your control measures and regularly review them to ensure the highest level of effective control is being used. Consult with workers and/or their health and safety representatives (HSRs) throughout this process The first step is to undertake a risk assessment. This can help you: ▶ identify which workers are at risk of exposure ▶ determine what sources and processes are causing the risk ▶ identify what kind of control measures should be put in place, and ▶ check the effectiveness of existing control measures. ▶ Complete your risk assessment regularly to ensure your control measures are still working; or if risk levels change. Key things to consider: ▶ What are the current legal requirements (e.g. public health orders, health directions) for my area and how do they apply to my business? ▶ Does the nature of the work undertaken by my business increase the risk of my workers being exposed to COVID-19? ▶ Does my workplace have facilities for hand washing and/or hand sanitising? ▶ Does my workplace environment/layout increase the risk of my workers and/or others being exposed to COVID-19 and can this be changed? ▶ Do I have workers that fall within a vulnerable worker category? ▶ What are my current cleaning and disinfecting arrangements? ▶ How prepared is my business if there is a case of COVID-19 in the workplace? ▶ Is there an increased risk of violence in my workplace? ▶ What worker communication and support mechanisms are in place? ▶ Do the changes I plan to make to my business or changes arising from COVID-19 change the risk? ▶ Do I have a plan to review my control measures to ensure they are effective?

Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:

2. Cleaning and hygiene	**Cleaning**
	The employer must prepare, implement and maintain a schedule for cleaning, and where appropriate disinfecting, that ensures the workplace is routinely cleaned. This must include furniture, equipment and other items
	
	The cleaning schedule should be in writing so that all workers are aware of the requirements. The schedule should take into account the level of risk of exposure to, contracting or spreading COVID-19 within the workplace.
	
	This schedule is to set out both the frequency and manner in which cleaning and disinfecting is to be done.
	
	Hygiene
	The employer is to put a hygiene procedure in place to ensure all persons at the workplace are observing appropriate hygiene measures to minimize the risk of exposure to, contracting or spreading COVID-19 within the workplace. This procedure is to address the cleaning of hands by workers and other persons in the workplace using soap and water or the use of hand sanitiser, as appropriate for the circumstances.
	
	Supplies and Equipment
	The employer must provide all the supplies and equipment necessary to ensure that the cleaning schedule and hygiene procedure implemented for the workplace is able to be complied with.
		Cleaning
		▶ You should arrange for extra cleaning of frequently used surfaces. Document this in your cleaning schedule.
		  Frequently used or touched surfaces or items, include:
		  - table tops, counters, desks and furniture, handrails, doors, door handles, cupboards, cupboard handles and light switches, tills, phones, keyboards, EFTPOS, tools and equipment
		  - amenities, including toilets and taps
		▶ The cabins/seats of farm equipment should be cleaned at the start and finish of each period of work, particularly if changing operators. This includes external and internal door handles, grab rails, seat belts, mirrors, steering wheel, gear levers, knobs and buttons used to operate ancillary equipment and keys etc.
		▶ Ensure the cleaning of less frequently used surfaces at least daily
		▶ Any surfaces that are visibly dirty, or have a spill, should be cleaned as soon as this is noticed, regardless of when they were last cleaned
		▶ Using detergent and water is appropriate for cleaning.
		▶ Cleaning should start with the cleanest surface first, progressively moving towards the dirtiest surface
		▶ When surfaces are clean they should be as dry as possible, to prevent slips/falls and the spread of viruses and bacteria through droplets
		▶ Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. These may take the form of liquids/sprays or wipes and are labelled as "disinfectant" on their packaging.
		▶ Disinfectants are usually only necessary if a surface is contaminated with potentially infectious material, or if your workplace has many customers or others entering each day
		▶ It is important to clean before disinfecting
		▶ Consult with staff responsible for cleaning, or your cleaning contractor. Ensure they can maintain the increased cleaning schedule. Discuss any supplies or equipment needed
		▶ Display your cleaning schedule in the workplace. Ensure staff sign them off each time they clean the area/items.
		
		Hygiene
		▶ You should direct your workers, contractors and volunteers to practice good hygiene at your workplace, including avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose or mouth
		▶ Everyone should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds and dry them with clean paper towel. Use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if unable to wash hands. This should occur:
		  - before and after eating
		  - after coughing or sneezing (into elbow/tissue)
		  - after going to the toilet
		  - when changing tasks
		  - operating farm equipment
		  - after touching potentially contaminated surfaces

Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:
Cleaning and hygiene cont.		▶ Ensure signs on correct hand washing are available in toilets and the staff break room. ▶ For workplaces also providing accommodation, the standards for hygiene continue to apply ▶ For workplaces conducting on-farm livestock sales or operating 'pick your own' or 'U-pick' operations, the standards for hygiene continue to apply. **Supplies and Equipment** ▶ Ensure cleaning products are available. Instruct workers in their safe use and make sure Safety Data Sheets are available Establish/document procedures for the safe disposal of contaminated waste ▶ Select and use appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products. Refer to the guidance from Safe Work Australia and Public Health ▶ Wear gloves and eye protection when handling and preparing disinfecting solutions.

3. Restrictions on entry to the workplace	The employer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a worker does not enter or attend the workplace if the worker is required to isolate, or quarantine, under a direction by:
	• the Director of Public health, under the *Public Health Act 1997,* or
	• the State Controller under the *Emergency Management Act 2006*
	
	A worker must not enter a workplace if the worker is required to isolate, or quarantine, under a direction made by:
	• the Director of Public Health, under the *Public Health Act 1997,* or
	• the State Controller under the *Emergency Management Act 2006*
	
	However, a worker is able to be at a workplace for the following reasons:
	1. to obtain medical treatment or testing in relation to COVID-19 , and the workplace is the appropriate place to receive such treatment or testing, or
	2. the worker is required or permitted, under a direction made in relation to COVID-19, to enter or be at the workplace, and does so in accordance with that direction, or
	3. there is an emergency and the worker is entering or at the workplace to protect:
	  - the safety of the worker, or
	  - the safety of another person, or
	  - the worker's property or the property of another person.
		▶ Display signs at entrances to the workplace telling people not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure signs are in a language that is easy to understand.
		▶ Ask people to leave the workplace if they display symptoms associated with COVID-19
		▶ Ensure workers, contractors, suppliers, customers, visitors and volunteers confirm they are feeling well when 'signing in' (refer to the National Farmers Federation COVID-19 Workplace Guide for an example)
		▶ Update your induction procedures to ensure all contractors, suppliers, customers, visitors, volunteers and new workers are aware of your COVID-19 controls (refer to farmer guidance information for Agricultural Contractors/Field staff)
		▶ Establish systems so that where possible, workers don't have direct contact with delivery drivers. For example, all paperwork is completed electronically.
		▶ If you have critical machinery or processes that require trained workers, think about how you will bring a new worker in to your workplace and train them, if an operator becomes ill.
		
		To help contact tracing:
		▶ If possible you should put in place a process to enable workers, contractors, visitors and volunteers at your workplace to sign in and out when they attend the workplace. The use of a Time Sheet App or texts to indicate when coming on/off the property can assist.
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Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:

4. Physical distancing at the workplace	An employer must take all reasonable steps to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable that the current physical distancing requirements are complied with. The current requirements are detailed on the WorkSafe Tasmania website.
	
	If it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the physical distancing requirements described above, then the employer should ensure that control measures are implemented in keeping with the requirements to manage the risks to health and safety relevant to COVID-19 as described in the "Managing Risks to Health and Safety" section of this document.
	
	A person at, entering or leaving a workplace must ensure that s/he complies with physical distancing requirements of that workplace, if it is reasonable to do so.
	
	Note: some premises may be exempt from the maximum density limits under the current Public Health Directions. Please refer to coronavirus.tas.gov.au for the latest advice and Directions.
		▶ Work out the capacity of your indoor workplaces so you can apply the appropriate density and physical distancing requirements. This may include measuring the area of a room/space and calculating its capacity against the current physical distancing requirements. This will ensure you know the maximum capacity of your gathering spaces.
		▶ Limit the number of people into your premises at any one time to meet these requirements
		▶ Display signs at the entrance and inside your workplace advising of these requirements
		▶ If indoors, use floor markings to keep workers, contractors, suppliers, visitors and volunteers at least 1.5m apart from each other.
		▶ If changing the physical layout of your premises, you should ensure that workers and others are able to safely enter, exit and move about the workplace under normal working conditions and in an emergency situation
		▶ If outdoors, adopt and/or change work practices and procedures to reflect current circumstances, and enable workers to maintain good hygiene and physical distancing practices while working
		▶ Use the hierarchy of controls to help identify appropriate control measures when physical distancing cannot be achieved, for example time limits
		▶ Where possible avoid face-to-face meetings or gatherings. Use other technology such as phones, radios. If you are around utes or farm machinery, adopt physical distancing measures
		▶ If you are unable to avoid meeting in person, hold these meetings outside where appropriate. Know the capacity of gathering spaces before scheduling meetings. Refer to the Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website for latest information
		▶ Stagger break times to reduce the number of staff gathering in the break room at any one time
		▶ Stagger operating hours to limit number of people in the workplace at any one time
		▶ Vary tasks to reduce the number of people required to be in indoor areas and work spaces
		▶ Separate tables/seating to ensure physical distancing
		▶ Where you can't achieve this physical distancing, identify appropriate alternative controls. These may include:
		  - minimising the number of people within any area at any one time
		  - staggering start, finish and break times
		  - moving different tasks to different areas of the workplace, or off-site if possible
		  - varying tasks to reduce the number of people required in indoor areas
		  - separating workers into dedicated teams, working the same shifts, or working in a particular work area
		  - ensuring each worker has their own tools and equipment
		  - personal protective equipment (PPE) may also be appropriate in some circumstances
		▶ For workplaces providing transport to and from the workplace as well as the use of on-farm vehicles and machinery, the standards for physical distancing are basically the same as what applies in the workplace.
		▶ For workplaces conducting on-farm livestock sales or operating 'pick your own' or 'U-pick' operations, the standards for physical distancing still apply.

Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:
5. Providing instruction, training and supervision in respect to COVID-19	The employer must provide each worker at the workplace (including contractors and volunteers) with information, training and instruction on: • the risks in relation to COVID-19, and • the control measures implemented in the workplace to mitigate those risks, in relation to COVID-19. The employer must provide adequate supervision to ensure that the control measures are implemented in the workplace in relation to COVID-19. The employer must also ensure that information and instruction is provided to other persons entering the workplace about the control measures in place to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 and the requirements of those persons to apply the control measures. The information and instructions are to be in a format that is reasonable to the circumstances. A worker or other person, at the workplace or entering or leaving the workplace, must comply, so far as the person is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the employer to allow the employer to manage the risks to health and safety within the workplace.	► Ensure everyone is aware of their responsibility to protect themselves, other workers, and the public ► Provide workers with written advice on how to manage COVID-19 risks. Ensure it is in a language that is suitable for your workers and is easy to understand. Access interpretation services if required. ► Display signs around the workplace advising of risk control requirements. For example, covering coughs, maximum number of people in a room, not to enter workplace if unwell ► Provide workers with training in COVID-19 controls (conduct training using physical distancing) ► Brief workers on the symptoms of COVID-19. Tell workers to stay home if they aren't feeling well; even if they consider their symptoms minor ► If workers need personal protective equipment (PPE), train workers to use it correctly ► Ensure workers, volunteers, contractors and visitors understand the consequences if the workplace becomes infected ► Ensure workers know what to do if someone at the workplace becomes infected with COVID-19 ► Allocate an employer representative or senior manager responsibility for ensuring COVID-19 controls are followed. Give them guidelines for ensuring these controls are applied/enforced at all times ► Document/record COVID-19 procedures; provide training to workers in these ► Keep notes of issues raised and discuss at staff meetings or toolbox talks ► COVID-19 controls should be maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure the highest level of effective control is being implemented, use the COVID-19 checklist ► Employers should actively identify the risks to work health and safety. In this case, the risk of being exposed to and contracting COVID-19 and be prepared to implement control measures to remove or reduce that risk. Use the COVID-19 Safety Plan ► Consider the mental health of individuals and teams ► Workers should take reasonable care of their own safety and make sure they don't affect the health and safety of anyone else (such as a co-worker, customer or client) ► Workers must also comply with any reasonable work health and safety instructions given by their employer. ► Customers/clients present at an employer's workplace must comply with any reasonable direction given to them about COVID-19 controls ► Employers must advise customers/clients of these requirements using signs at the entrances of workplace, and if available, through regular voice-over messages.

Title	Standard	Actions to control the risks associated with COVID-19 may include, but not limited to:
6. Responding to an incident of COVID-19 in the workplace	The employer at a workplace must ensure that an emergency plan is prepared for the workplace that provides for emergency procedures, testing of the procedures and the provision of information, training and instruction to relevant workers in implementing the emergency procedures.	An emergency plan is a document that sets out instructions for workers and others in the case of an emergency. A COVID-19 emergency response plan should detail: ▶ How the business will respond in the event of contamination by a worker or customer ▶ Who has responsibilities in this event. Immediately notify Public Health by phoning 1800 671 738 and follow their advice to: ▶ Help the affected person receive medical treatment ▶ Identify who has been in close contact with the ill person ▶ Isolate the affected areas: keep staff and customers away. You may need to close the business until advised it is safe to reopen. Organise cleaning of the area as directed by Public Health. For cleaning: ▶ Review the Safe Work Australia guidance on cleaning and disinfecting workplaces ▶ Wear PPE: face mask, protective eyewear and gloves ▶ Remove soiled or contaminated items and dispose of them in a safe way ▶ Clean and disinfect all surfaces or items that may have been in contact with the ill person. In some cases, you must notify WorkSafe Tasmania. Check the WorkSafe Tasmania website for requirements. You may need to include in your plan: ▶ Contact details for people who have specific roles or responsibilities under the emergency plan. For example, managers, security, cleaners, or first aid officers ▶ Contact details for COVID-19 notification to Public Health ▶ A description of the method to alert people to an emergency or possible emergency – this may be affected by remote working ▶ Any changes to evacuation procedures or assembly points ▶ The post-incident follow-up process, including who must be notified. (This may include the process for notifying the business if a worker experiences an emergency while working from home.) ▶ If you share facilities, include a process for advising other businesses about a diagnosis of COVID-19 ▶ Procedures for testing the emergency plan, including the frequency of testing must be included ▶ Arrange training to ensure all staff are aware of, and understand the plan.