

# Field Based Home Offices: COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan

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## General

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) has developed this **CO**rona**VI**rus **D**isease **2019** (COVID-19) Preparedness & Response Plan in accordance with the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\)](#) latest guidance and the [MIOSHA General Duty Clause](#), which requires the employer to furnish each employee with “a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards.....”.

The purpose of this plan is to eliminate or minimize potential exposure to and the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace based on CDC guidance. All employees are responsible for complying with all applicable aspects of this plan. This written plan is available to all employees via the intranet and upon request. Questions about this plan should be directed to the Human Resources Director or the [Agency Safety Coordinator](#).

## Exposure Determination

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) has evaluated routine and reasonably anticipated tasks and procedures for all employees to determine whether there is actual or reasonably anticipated employee exposure to COVID-19. The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) has determined that all office positions, jobs, or tasks fall into the medium or lower (caution) exposure risk levels. This determination is consistent with the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Hazard Recognition/Clarifying Risk of Worker Exposure to COVID-19](#).

**Medium Exposure Risk:** Jobs that require either frequent close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) or sustained close contact with other people in areas with community transmission. *Because any given person may be an asymptomatic carrier, an employee’s exposure risk may increase when they have repeated, prolonged contact with other people in these situations, particularly where physical distancing and other infection prevention measures may not be possible or are not robustly implemented and consistently followed.*

**Lower (caution) Exposure Risk:** Jobs that do not require close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with other people. Employees in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

Positions/Job/Task	Exposure Determination	Qualifying Factors
Agriculture Development Division (AGD – 7 staff) Animal Industry Division (AID – 30 staff)	Medium or Lower	Public Contact

Environmental Stewardship Division (ESD – 22 staff) Food & Dairy Division (FDD – 101 staff) Laboratory Division (LAB – 32 staff) Pesticide, Plant Pest Management (PPPM – 69 staff)		
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This document covers all job roles for staff Field Based Home Offices. In the event a title is omitted, this exposure plan covers all staff working at this location.

Per the [CDC](#), employees are best protected when they are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination. In general, employees are up to date on their COVID-19 vaccination if they have received all recommended doses in the primary series and [one booster](#) when eligible. Getting a second booster is not necessary to be considered up to date at this time.

**Engineering Controls**

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) has implemented feasible engineering controls to minimize or eliminate employee exposure to COVID-19. Engineering controls involve isolating employees from work-related hazards using ventilation and other engineered solutions (e.g., restrict office access, situate employees with their computers facing inward and away from cubicle doors or aiseways, use of high cubicle walls/panels or other barriers, enclosed offices, etc.).

**Administrative Controls**

Administrative controls are workplace policies, procedures and practices that minimize or eliminate employee exposure to the hazard. The following administrative controls have been established for the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD).

Position/Task	Administrative Controls
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>All Employees</b></p>	<p>1. Employees are required to self-monitor for <a href="#">COVID-19 signs and symptoms</a> prior to leaving for the workplace.</p>
	<p>2. Employees who have experienced a new onset of <a href="#">COVID-19 symptoms</a> that cannot otherwise be attributed to an alternate diagnosis or negative COVID-19 test must contact their supervisor and Human Resources Director for further direction and follow-up.</p>
	<p>3. Employees who do not pass the screening criteria will be instructed to contact their supervisor, not report to work, and may use appropriate leave credits or lost time. Employees who don't pass the screening criteria due to a positive COVID-19 test</p>

	or exposure should contact their Human Resources Director.
	4. Employees who experience <a href="#">COVID-19 symptoms</a> at work should notify their supervisor immediately and will not be permitted to stay at work. The Michigan Civil Service Commission (MCSC) and collective bargaining agreements have leave policies in place that promote workers staying at home when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when required by a health care provider to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household. Eligible employees have access to paid sick and annual leave and unpaid medical, and FMLA leaves.
	5. Employees are subject to a health screening upon arrival at the workplace.
	6. Employees are required to promptly report any signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to the Human Resources Director during work to their supervisor.
	7. Employees are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before coming to work, upon entering the building and regularly throughout the workday.
	8. Flexible/alternate work schedules, remote work, or a combination of remote work/in-office work may be considered on a case-by-case basis. These options are neither a benefit nor an entitlement; they are subject to agency business/operational needs and may be ended by the Director or Human Resources Director anytime for any reason. Deployment of Procedure #34 – Remote Work Policy ( <a href="#">LINK</a> ).
	9. Use of videoconferencing or teleconferencing for meetings and gatherings will be considered regardless of teleworking or being in the office.
	10. Employees who have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at the workplace and requiring quarantine will be instructed by the Human Resources Director as to next steps. The employee's health status, health information or COVID-19-related exposure information will be kept confidential to the extent possible.
	11. It is recommended MDARD staff only enter restrooms that have a one-person capacity.
	12. Change behaviors where necessary to minimize contact with the regulatory community. Eliminate signatures where possible on inspection documents, minimize touching and unnecessary public exposure.
	13. Continue to utilize alternative forms of communication (teams, phones, facetime, etc.) versus face-to-face discussions with the regulatory community.

## **Hand Hygiene and Disinfection of Work Surfaces**

Frequent handwashing is one of the best ways employees can protect themselves from getting sick. To prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic, employees should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands BEFORE and AFTER:

- Blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Entering and leaving a public place or work area.
- Preparing or eating food.
- Touching a potentially contaminated surface or object, such as a door handle, table, etc.
- Touching garbage.
- Touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Using the restroom.

When the provision of handwashing facilities is not feasible, the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) will provide employees with antiseptic hand sanitizers or towelettes.

The virus that causes COVID-19 can land on work surfaces. While the risk of infection from touching a surface is low, regular housekeeping practices have been implemented for the routine cleaning and disinfecting of elevators, restrooms, breakrooms, conference/meeting rooms, training rooms, doorknobs, and other high touch areas.

CDC guidance will be followed for special cleaning and disinfecting when someone in the office or when someone visited the office has tested positive for COVID-19.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product.

Please refer to the Department of Technology, Management and Budget/[DTMB Return to Office Plan, State Workplace Guidelines](#) for any additional cleaning and disinfection criteria.

## **Face Coverings/Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment**

Face coverings/masks are generally no longer required while working in an office setting or outdoors subject to some considerations:

- ❖ Masking may still be required in high-risk congregate settings, such as long-term-

care, healthcare, and correctional facilities, or in response to accommodation requests.

- ❖ Agencies may have additional policies to address specific operational needs, visitors and clients, employee tasks, work locations, or quarantine or isolation.
- ❖ Local health departments and organizations may adopt other masking requirements to be followed.
- ❖ Employees who are at elevated risk or feel better protected may mask consistent with operational needs.
- ❖ State masking requirements may be updated in the future as conditions evolve.

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) will provide employees with any required personal protective equipment or clothing (PPE) for the protection from COVID-19 appropriate to the exposure risk associated with the job following the CDC and OSHA guidance. All types of PPE are to be:

- ❖ Selected based upon the hazard to the employee.
- ❖ Properly fitted and periodically refitted as applicable.
- ❖ Consistently and properly worn when required.
- ❖ Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary.
- ❖ Properly removed, cleaned, stored, or disposed of as applicable to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.

The following type(s) of PPE have been selected for use:

<b>Positions/job/task</b>	<b>PPE</b>
All MDARD positions	None currently

For the purposes of this plan, a nonmedical cloth face covering/mask is NOT considered PPE.

**Note:** Some exceptions may apply; exceptions are NOT automatic. Reasonable accommodations may be available to qualified applicants and employees with disabilities. Employees requesting an exception MUST contact the [Agency ADA Title I Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator](#) to initiate the reasonable accommodation/disability accommodation process.

Employees may provide and use their own face coverings/masks consistent with operational needs. Face coverings/masks worn in the workplace shall NOT be political, offensive or contain vulgar, obscene, abusive, or confrontational gestures, language, pictures, websites, etc. Face coverings/masks representing certain colleges, universities, sports teams, etc. are permissible provided they meet the above-mentioned criteria.

## **Vehicle Guidance**

Regardless of a vehicle being staff issued or if the vehicle is shared/pooled, staff shall strictly follow the clean-in and clean-out vehicle approach.

- Common touch points in motor vehicles and equipment must be sanitized between uses.
- Hand sanitizer must be placed in vehicles.
- Prior to using a vehicle use a sanitizing wipe to clean all surfaces that may be touched including:
  - Steering Wheel
  - Door Handles
  - Turn signals and wiper controls
  - Climate control knobs
  - On board control panel / radio controls
  - Shift handle
  - Sun Visor
  - Dashboard
  - Glove box handle
  - Center console
  - Keys
  - Seatbelt hardware
  - Rearview Mirror
- When sanitizing wipes are getting low, replace them before they run out.
- Sanitize any tools or equipment taken in and out of the vehicle.
- Staff should wash their hands with soap and water after using a vehicle or equipment.
- During and after fueling of equipment or vehicles or if entry into a business location is necessary, appropriate PPE must be worn and proper sanitization of hands must occur.

## **Carpool and Rideshares**

The following protective measures are required whenever two or more persons share either a state vehicle or personal vehicle for work purposes:

- Stay home when sick.
- Increase the fresh air intake via the vents or by slightly opening the windows. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle at the beginning and end of each shift, and after an occupant becomes sick. Vehicle and Travel Services (VTS) has advised that drivers using motor pool cars should bring agency-provided wipes to clean and disinfect frequently touched vehicle surfaces at the beginning and end of each shift, as they no longer provide these supplies or clean between uses. Motor pool cars are typically assigned and rotated based on operational need with the vehicle sitting the longest being the assigned first, etc.

## **Interaction with 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties**

Employees should hold meetings as a conference call or virtual meeting where possible. When it is necessary to meet with individuals at their work location, please consider the following:

- Hold meetings outside where appropriate.
- All paperwork should be electronically signed and exchanged when possible.
- If paperwork cannot be completed electronically, workers can take a picture of documents and send by email. If documents need to be signed and exchanged in person, have the other person step away to review and sign.
- Avoid sharing pens, clipboards, etc. with others and wear appropriate PPE during the meeting.
- Wash hands after returning indoors and wipe all surfaces immediately. If hand washing cannot be done, use hand sanitizer.
- Recognize establishment operators and staff are under an unusually high level of stress in this unprecedented time. If the inspection is not a "for cause" inspection, the operator appears under extreme pressure or agitated, and you are concerned for personal safety, consider delaying the inspection.
- Consider contacting the establishment and discussing the inspection in advance of the scheduled inspection date. Given the current environment, conducting unannounced inspections may not be the most practical unless specific conditions at the establishment indicate the need for an unannounced arrival.
- Consider scheduling field inspection work at times when consumer traffic is low. This may include an earlier or later start time, or arriving on days that are historically less busy, or completing field activities outside of an establishment's public operating hours.
- The regulatory community/business may request staff to complete a health screening or questionnaire at their off-site facility. Although each business may have unique verbiage the questions should be similar to the MDARD Health Screening survey. Please avoid providing personal information, example birthdate, social security number, etc.
- Avoid physical contact, restrain from shaking hands or exchanging business cards.
- Only bring equipment into the establishment that is needed for the inspection. Limit the amount of equipment to that which you can carry and that which can be easily disinfected.
- Conduct exit interview via phone or email when possible.

If at any time during the inspection, you feel your personal safety is at risk, immediately discontinue the inspection, leave the establishment and contact your supervisor.

## Travel

All international business travel must be approved by the Office of the State Employer (OSE). Requests are to be submitted through the completion of an [online form](#) and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. OSE determinations or requests for additional information will be returned to the individual submitting the online form. A separate request must be submitted for each employee traveling.

To maximize employee protections and potentially prevent the spreading of COVID-19 to others, all persons traveling on behalf of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) will follow the latest CDC guidance for domestic and international business travel.

All domestic and international business travel should be delayed until employees are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination.

## Feeling Sick and Sick Employees

Employees should **stay home** and contact their immediate supervisor and healthcare provider if they have a fever, cough, or other symptoms, or believe they might have COVID-19. Employees should contact the Human Resources Director and their immediate supervisor if they, a family member, or someone they live with tests positive for COVID-19 so they can trace and monitor others with whom they have been in close contact while at work. The evaluation of a work-related exposure incident, follow up, and coordination of proper cleaning and disinfecting activities will be conducted by the Human Resources Director, who will follow-up with building management if appropriate.

## Daily Health Screenings/Health Surveillance

All employees, contractors, interns, or other persons conducting work on behalf of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) will be required to participate in daily health screenings upon their return to the workplace. These health screenings are comprised of COVID-related questions about symptoms and suspected or confirmed exposure to people with possible COVID-19.

These health screenings can occur through one or more ways (e.g., paper questionnaire, COVID screening app using a state-issued electronic device, [web-based questionnaire](#) using a personal or state-issued cell phone, or by an employee swiping their employee identification badge/access card to enter restricted areas such as parking lots, buildings, rooms, locked storage areas, etc.).

**Note:** each time an employee logs onto a state-provided electronic device or

swipes their identification/badge to access a secure site or area the person affirms they are symptom-free and feeling well.

Persons exhibiting signs of illness will not be permitted into the building.

## **Close Contacts and When to Quarantine**

Employees who are up-to-date with their vaccinations (have received all recommended doses in the primary series and [one booster](#) when eligible) or who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who has COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, employees who have not tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days should get tested 5 days after their exposure, even if they do not have symptoms, and follow other applicable CDC guidance.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated should be quarantined if they have been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19. Quarantine is about keeping employees who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Report COVID-19 exposure(s) to the Human Resources Director and follow their instructions.

Local public health authorities often determine and establish the quarantine options for their jurisdictions. Please contact the Human Resources Director with any questions.

## **Training**

All employees, contractors, interns, or other persons conducting work on behalf of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) must successfully complete the OSE's "COVID-19: Keeping You Safe at Work" training, which can be found out on the [Civil Service Learning Center](#). This training is in addition to any building-specific training needed to ensure compliance with applicable training requirements and/or COVID-related best practices. Training shall minimally include but is not limited to:

- ❖ Routes by which the virus causing COVID-19 is spread.
- ❖ Symptoms of a COVID-19 infection.
- ❖ Steps employees must take if they have a fever, cough or other symptoms, or believe they might have COVID-19 (e.g., stay home; call their immediate supervisor and healthcare provider; notify their Human Resources Director if the employee, a family member, or someone the employee lives with tests positive for COVID-19 so the agency can contact trace and monitor others with whom the employee had been in close contact while at work; etc.).
- ❖ The risk of a COVID-19 exposure.

- ❖ Measures that the building has taken, and work rules employees must follow to prevent exposure (e.g., hand hygiene, routine cleaning and disinfection, other personal protective equipment, travel restrictions, daily health screenings, close contact and when to quarantine, building signage, etc.).
- ❖ Resources available (e.g., Employee Service Program).

**NOTE:** It is recommended that employee training records minimally contain the name(s) of employee(s) trained, date of training, name of trainer and content of training.

## **Recordkeeping**

All Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) COVID-19 related records (e.g., health screenings, training records, etc.) will be kept in accordance with applicable Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) record retention requirements.

All Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) work-related records and COVID-19 exposures will be reported and recorded as required by MIOSHA Standard [Part 11: Recording and Reporting of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses](#). For more information, refer to [OSHA's Updated Interim Enforcement Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) or [29 CFR 1904.39\(a\)-\(b\)\(11\)](#).

## **COVID-19 Safe Restart Team**

The Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) COVID-19 Safe Restart Team shall be minimally comprised of the team listed below. Other Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) employees may be assigned special duties on a case-by-case basis.

This team will be responsible for establishing and implementing return to workplace goals, reviewing and updating the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan, and identifying best practices and improvement needs stemming from agency communications, engineering and administrative work practice controls, and protective measures used during the pandemic.

### MDARD Safe Restart Team:

Director – Gary McDowell  
Chief Deputy Director - Ken McFarlane  
QOL HR Director – Selena Conklin  
Safety Coordinator – Jon Kujat  
Safe Restart Team Leader: Jamie Zmitko-Somers

These leaders will ensure plans are implemented consistently across MDARD, with consideration to unique operations. Three priority areas have been established for MDARD's Safe Restart Plan:

- Employee Communication
- Employee Phased Return
- Employee Safety – Control Plan

The Safe Restart, represented by multiple MDARD divisions, was created to develop and implement return to work protocols with a lead selected for each priority.

Employee Phased Return Team		Employee Communication		Employee Safety – Control Plan	
Steve Carlson	Lead – PPPM	Elizabeth Weier	Lead – EXO (EM)	Kevin Bambenek	Lead – EXO (OOI)
Cheri Ayers	EXO	Jeanne Hausler	EXO (OC)	Jon Kujat	EXO (OOI)
Heather Brewer	FDD	Jamie Zmitko-Somers	AGD	Jeff Schaner	AID
Jim Padden	FDD	Michelle Kusnier	FDD	Jason De Chene	LAB
Jordan Polaskey	LAB				

### COVID-19 Safety Coordinator(s)

Jon Kujat (mobile: 517-582-1156, email: KujatJ@michigan.gov) will serve as the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) COVID-19 Safety Coordinator.

The COVID-19 Safety Coordinator will monitor or report on implemented COVID-19 control strategies required for the workplace as needed or requested.

### Support and Resources

Employees having difficulty transitioning back to in-person office work or who are experiencing other personal or professional challenges are encouraged to access resources provided by the [Employee Service Program \(ESP\)](#) website or contact ESP at 800-521-1377 or [MCSC-ESP@mi.gov](mailto:MCSC-ESP@mi.gov). Additional health and safety-related resources can be found below:

- ❖ [State of Michigan Agency/Department Return to Work Plans](#)
- ❖ [CDC COVID-19 Resources](#)
- ❖ MDHHS Coronavirus Resources: [www.mi.gov/coronavirus](http://www.mi.gov/coronavirus)
- ❖ [Michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://Michigan.gov/coronavirus)
- ❖ [MIOSHA COVID-19 Resources](#)
- ❖ [MIOSHA General Industry Safety & Health Standards](#)
- ❖ [OSHA COVID-19 Resources](#)
- ❖ [MIOSHA Emergency Rules](#)
- ❖ Any applicable [State of Michigan Executive Orders & Directives](#)

## **Miscellaneous**

Please refer to the [DTMB Return to Office Plan, State Workplace Guidelines](#) for any additional requirements.