



# A Guide for Safe Visitor Interaction on Farm during COVID-19

*Biosecurity is the implementation of actions that reduce the chance of introducing or spreading infectious agents that cause animal disease and/or the spread of plant pests.*

Farm-level biosecurity is about a series of management practices designed to minimize, prevent or control:

1. The introduction of infectious pathogens onto a farm;
2. Spread within a farm production operation;
3. Export of these pathogens beyond the farm, which may have an adverse effect on the economy, the environment, and human health.

Biosecurity is vital in the sustainability of livestock production, especially when disease outbreaks occur nationally and internationally. With world-wide travel, the global environment has increased the potential to spread disease(s) rapidly as experienced with the current COVID-19 pandemic.

## General Health and Safety Protocols for Farm Workers

COVID-19 is spread by direct close contact, droplets by aerosol spread, contaminated surfaces and lesser by feces. It is important to remember the virus can be shed by individuals who are asymptomatic. At times, an infected individual may not currently, or ever, express symptoms or signs, so it can easily spread undetected.

As a general COVID-19 resource visit the [Ontario government's guidance: Agriculture health and safety during COVID-19](#) or for details on how to [mitigate the risk while operating a business during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

The health and wellbeing of you and your farm workers should be top priority – if you or staff feel ill or have symptoms complete the online [Self-Assessment](#) and stay home.

## Best Practices with On-Farm Visitors

More than ever, producers should consider the potential risks associated with farm visitors entering their premises, and implement the measures stated below to ensure safety during these visits.

### a. Prior to Visit

- Consult with essential personnel and identify if a farm visit is required, or if an issue can be resolved virtually by phone or email.
- Inform all visitors of your facilities biosecurity protocol and PPE requirements.
- Re-enforce biosecurity protocols by posting highly visible posters at all necessary entry points requesting visitors to [self-assess for symptoms](#), [wash or sanitize hands](#) before entering, and [wear any required PPE](#) correctly
  - *Printable Posters and Tip Sheets can be downloaded at [www.ontariosheep.org/biosecurity](http://www.ontariosheep.org/biosecurity)*
- Maintain a visitor logbook (paper or virtual) and record name(s) of visiting personnel, the date of visit, and their arrival and departure times.
- [Pre-screen](#) all personnel for COVID-19 symptoms prior to visit
  - *Options for pre-screening include: verbal screening 24 hours before scheduled visit, checking temperature for fever (100.4° F/38° C or greater) using temperature monitor, request a pre-screening form be completed 24-72 hours before scheduled visit*  
[www.ontariosheep.org/uploads/userfiles/files/COVID\\_visitor%20screening%20form.pdf](http://www.ontariosheep.org/uploads/userfiles/files/COVID_visitor%20screening%20form.pdf)
- Keep an appropriate stock of cleaning and disinfecting supplies.

### b. During the Visit

- Limit farm access to essential personnel or personnel performing essential activities.
  - *Essential activities are described as those necessary for the care and wellbeing of livestock, employees and facilities that require prompt attention.*
- Designate visitor zones and restrict visitor access to only necessary buildings or equipment.

- Avoid close contact such as hand shaking and maintain a practice safe social distancing at a minimum of 6-feet.
- Provide visitor access to soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean hands prior to entering any buildings.

### c. After Visit

- Check that your visitor log is current with recent visitor details (i.e., name, date, arrival and departure times).
- [Wash your hands](#) for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Sanitize any surfaces or equipment used or touched during a visitor encounter.
- Wash your clothes or coveralls once home.

## Cleaning and Sanitation on the Farm

The main routes of COVID-19 transmission are by direct close contact, droplets by aerosol spread and contaminated surfaces. It is important to clean and sanitize commonly touched surfaces regularly to minimize the transmission of the virus especially when visitors have been present.

A listing of best cleaning and sanitation practices is provided below:

- Develop a disinfecting and cleaning program with schedules for each work area
- Frequently sanitize high-touch surfaces in and on vehicles and equipment
  - i.e. *Door handles (interior and exterior), steering wheel, keys, center console, seatbelts, gear controls, buttons or knobs, control panels, glove box, fuel tank lid, levers, handling facility equipment*
- Frequently sanitize high-touch surfaces in farm buildings and always after having visitors
  - i.e. *Door handles (interior and exterior), light switches, bathroom surfaces, tools (applicator guns, clippers, etc.), kitchenettes (refrigerator door handles, cupboards etc.)*

- Keep facility fully stocked with soap, clean or disposable towels, [COVID-19 fighting disinfectants](#) and sanitizer.
  - *Use disposable or dedicated re-useable clean cloths for cleaning*
- Follow product manufacturer's instructions when cleaning (i.e. PPE requirements and ventilation)

**For more details on how to build a biosecurity plan to mitigate COVID-19 exposure for your farm visit the following resources:**

[Farmer COVID-19 Toolkit](#) – an “all-in-one” resource for farmers containing information on prevention, control, outbreak management, testing and additional guidance.

[Develop your COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#) – tips on how to create a plan to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

[COVID-19: Resources for the agri-food industry](#) – OMAFRA resource listing funding, prevention, control and information on best practices.

[Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#) – information on how to develop a safety plan to protect workers, customer and public from COVID-19.

[Public Health Ontario](#) or [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) – access to updates regarding current health and safety protocols.

[COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) – a virtual self-assessment and recommendation tool if you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms.

[Cleaning & Disinfecting Surfaces on the Farm](#) – a quick and easy to follow guide on cleaning surfaces on farm to mitigate COVID-19 risk.

[Health Canada's List of Hard-Surface Disinfectants](#) – access to a full listing of cleaning and disinfecting agents that fight COVID-19.

[Workplace PPE Supplier Directory](#) – access to a listing of over 200 companies that sell personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safety supplies.

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