



Strategies to Control the Spread of COVID at Seafood Processing Plants: Employee Health

Authored by Abigail Villalba, Extension Specialist, Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Virginia Tech

Employee Health: At Work or Returning to Work after Exposure

To ensure continuity of operations of essential functions, CDC advises that critical infrastructure workers (**essential workers**) may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19, provided they remain asymptomatic, have not had a positive test result for COVID-19, and additional precautions are implemented to protect them and the community.

Steps for employers

Screen all employees for fever before entering to work: Check temperatures of workers and assess symptoms at the start of each shift to identify anyone with a fever of 100.4°F or greater. Do not let employees enter the workplace if they have a fever of 100.4°F or greater.

Regular Monitoring: As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.

Wear a Mask: The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.

Social Distance: The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.

Disinfect and clean work spaces: Clean and disinfect all shared areas and shared electronic equipment routinely.

Establish and maintain engineering controls and administrative controls.

Develop a contingency plan for situations that may arise as a result of outbreaks.

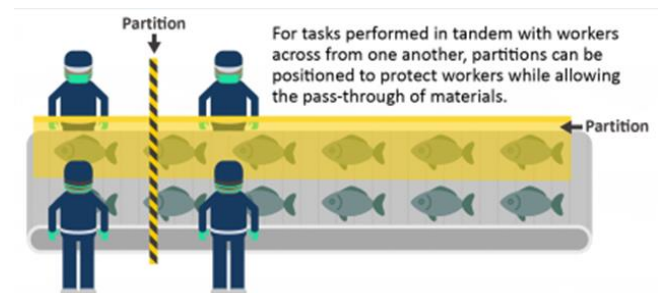


Figure 1. Engineering controls showing alignment and physical barriers to keep workers at social distance (CDC illustration).

Steps for workers

Do

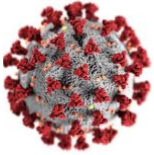
- Take your temperature before work.
- Wear a face mask at all times.
- Practice social distancing in the workplace as work duties permit.
- Follow health and personal hygiene practices

Don't

- Stay at work if you become sick.
- Share headsets or objects used near face.

- Congregate in the break room or other crowded places.

Know about COVID-19



Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.

COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe and may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Know how COVID-19 is spread



- Between people who are in close contact with one another (about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets such as coughs, sneezes or talks
- Droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or inhaled into the lungs.

[Agricultural Employer Checklist for Creating a COVID-19 Assessment and Control Plan](#)

Employers can use this checklist to create a COVID-19 assessment and control plan for applying specific preparation, prevention, and management measures.

This checklist can be modified to your needs and includes:

Section 1: Assessment

Section 2: Control Plan based on the Hierarchy of Controls

- Screening and Monitoring Workers
- Managing Sick Workers
- Addressing Return to Work after Worker Exposure to COVID-19
- Engineering Controls
- Cleaning, Disinfection, and Sanitation
- Administrative Controls
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Section 3: Special Considerations for Shared Housing

Section 4: Special Considerations for Shared Transportation

Section 5: Special Considerations for Children

Additional Resources

CDC. 2020. Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19. Interim guidance.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html>

CDC 2020. Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC 2020. Protecting Seafood Processing Workers from COVID-19. Interim Guidance from CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Developed in consultation with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-seafood-processing.html>

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.