



Guide to Support Farm Workers in Santa Cruz County: Focused on Those Who Have or Are Presumed to Have COVID 19

After training employees to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as [required by Cal /OSHA](#), some employees may unfortunately still get sick with COVID-19 while either at work or in the community. In this case, it is important to be prepared and provide support to your employee.

This document outlines the process to support positive and presumptive positive COVID-19 cases in the Pajaro Valley to ensure each individual has access to the resources they need while reducing the risk of spread of COVID-19 to other coworkers, household, family, and community members.

This document is not comprehensive; every situation is unique, see [here](#) for a list of additional information sources on how to handle positive/presumed positive situations. Additional information and resources on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Employer Guidance:

1. If an employee informs you they are experiencing symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19:

- a. **Tell the employee to immediately leave the workplace.** Clean and disinfect all surfaces they may have touched.
- b. Advise the employee to self-isolate at home and contact their healthcare provider as needed. If they do not have a health care provider, they can call 2-1-1 or reach out to:

Santa Cruz Health Center
1080 Emeline Ave.
Santa Cruz, CA, 95060
(831) 454-4100

Watsonville Health Center
1430 Freedom Blvd. Suite D
Watsonville, CA, 95076
(831) 763-8400

- c. Assure the safety of your work force. See CDC guidance for critical workers, including agriculture [here](#).
- d. Remind the employee of the employer's [applicable leave policy\(ies\)](#) regarding COVID-19
- e. If the employee tests positive for COVID-19, their healthcare provider will contact the Public Health's Department's Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) to report the case. CDU will follow-up with the employee to investigate the case. If during the investigation there is a concern of a workplace exposure, the CD unit will be in touch with the employer.
- f. Employers are welcome to contact CDU for additional guidance, questions, or concerns.
 - i. Santa Cruz County Communicable Disease Unit: 831-454-4114
 - ii. Monterey County Communicable Disease Unit: 831-755-4521
 - iii. San Benito County Public Health Division: 831-637-5367

2. If you receive a call from a Health Official reporting that there has been COVID-19 exposure in your workplace, then:

- a. Depending on the exposure, CD Unit will provide you an Exposure Notice that can be shared with all employees. If your employee reveals to you that they have tested positive for COVID, you must protect that employee's privacy.
- b. Employees can continue to work if:
 - i. They remain asymptomatic

- ii. Adhere to physical distancing and face coverings
- iii. Cover cough and sneezes
- iv. Maintain good hand hygiene.
- c. Ask staff to continue to monitor for symptoms:
 - i. Fever
 - ii. Cough
 - iii. Shortness of breath
 - iv. Sore throat
 - v. Headache
 - vi. Sudden Inability to taste or smell
- d. Remind the employee of the applicable leave policies regarding COVID-19

COVID-19 Testing and Follow-Up Process

If an employee has symptoms of COVID19* and feels they need to be tested they should:

1. Self-quarantine
2. Call their physician
 - a. If appropriate, the physician will order the test.
3. While waiting for the test results, the employee must self-quarantine.
4. If the employee is positive for COVID19, they will be contacted by the CD Unit to:
 - a. Discuss who they have been in contact with. These interviews are very important to protect their health and the health of their community.
 - a. Interview them to determine if they have a safe space to self-isolate
 - b. Provide information and case management assistance as necessary
2. Health Care Provider shares case information with the relevant County depending on where the person lives**

*Note this process may be different if the person is not exhibiting symptoms

** Patients can go to health care providers in either County. The Health care provider will link the patient to the appropriate County resources depending on their home address

H-2A / Employee Housing

In the event a worker living in employer-provided housing exhibits symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, they should be self-isolated pursuant to the guidance mentioned above. This may include placing the worker in an isolated dwelling unit to the extent feasible. Employers may also consider placing such workers in a hotel or motel. H-2A employers would simply notify the Office of Foreign Labor Certification that the worker was moved to alternative housing due to COVID-19 quarantine measures. The employer is still obligated to provide three meals a day or free and convenient kitchen facilities and a means for the employee to get food and necessary provisions. Employers should always treat such employees with compassion and respect and try to tend to their needs as they convalesce during these difficult circumstances.

Additional Housing Support

While interviewing patients with COVID-19, CDU staff will assess whether or not patients have suitable places to self-isolate as they recuperate. If necessary, CDU staff will work to find temporary housing to help ensure the spread of COVID19 is mitigated. This assessment is done on a case by case basis.

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