



## **2021 SEASONAL AGRICULTURE WORKERS COVID-19 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:**

What employers need to know regarding  
isolation and post-isolation

**Health and  
Social Services**  
Haldimand and Norfolk

# Background

COVID-19 is a public health emergency. This disease has affected all the residents of Haldimand and Norfolk Counties in some manner. One of the fundamental strategies to control the transmission of COVID-19 is the self-isolation of all individuals who are entering Canada for a period of 14 days. This approach is key to “breaking the chain of transmission”.

In the context of seasonal agriculture workers (also referred to as migrant farm workers), there are some unique items that must be addressed. Every agricultural enterprise (employer) must submit an Isolation Plan Application to the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit (HNHU) for each housing unit that will be used as an isolation residence for their seasonal agricultural workers. These plans must be reviewed and approved by the HNHU prior to workers embarking from their home county. This document provides direction to the employers of seasonal agriculture workers, and the workers themselves, to meet self-isolation requirements.

In formulating these isolation plans, agricultural enterprises must provide seasonal agricultural workers the supplies, services and amenities to effectuate a successful plan. This includes food, water, personal care supplies and medications. The plan should recognize and affirm the cultural and religious preferences of the workers. These farm specific plans should also be compliant with all applicable statutes, rules and regulations.

Beyond the isolation plans requirements, this document will provide direction on post-isolation requirements for the remainder of the 2021 season.

# Summary of Changes for 2021

- The [2021 Isolation Plan Application](#) is now an online fillable form which is submitted electronically, in order to make the submission process more efficient.
- A 2021 Isolation Plan Application form must be submitted **for each individual isolation residence**.
- If an approved isolation residence will house subsequent waves of worker arrivals not included in the original plan, a simple, online fillable [Appendix A to 2021 Isolation Plan](#) can be submitted, rather than resubmitting the whole Isolation Plan.
- Changes to any approved isolation plan will require another plan submission.
- All isolation residences (if not a routinely inspected bunkhouse), will require an inspection by a Public Health Inspector prior to receiving plan approval, with the exception of hotels and motels.
- [Seasonal Agriculture Worker Arrival Information](#) must be submitted by employers within 24 hours of their workers' arrival, using the online fillable form.
- As it pertains to all accommodations used to house seasonal agriculture workers for the 2021 season (including isolation and post-isolation), where there is more than one bed in a sleeping area, **all beds must be 2 metres away from the next bed (frame-to-frame)**.
- There will be no allowances for the use of temporary partitions or barriers to decrease the required 2 metres of space between beds.
- Bunk beds may be used, however, workers must sleep in the opposite direction to one another (head-to-toe orientation).
- [Wellness Check](#) Records must be submitted to HNHU at [ehthotline@hnhss.ca](mailto:ehthotline@hnhss.ca) on **Day 7 as well as Day 14** for all workers who are completing the isolation period.
- Where an agricultural enterprise is **accepting transferred workers** onto the farm, [Seasonal Agriculture Worker Incoming Transfer Information](#) must be submitted by employers within 24 hours of their arrival, using the online fillable form.
- All the online forms mentioned above can be found at <https://hnhu.org/health-topic/covid-19-farms/>. PDF versions of all forms are also available for those employers unable to complete the forms electronically.

# Arrival at the Airport & Transportation to the Isolation Residence

It is important that all seasonal agriculture workers keep their physical distance from others upon arrival at the airport. Appropriate face masks/coverings are required to be worn at all times while in the airport and during transportation to their isolation residence. All seasonal agriculture workers should bring with them a supply of hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) so that hand hygiene can be practiced as needed.

The worker must be transported to the isolation residence in a manner respecting physical distancing requirements. Public transportation is not permitted. If a bus or similar vehicle is utilized, the workers must be separated by two rows. If a private car is used, the workers should be in the back seat. Where weather permits, the windows should be open. Masks must be worn by all persons in the vehicle.

## Arrival at the isolation residence

Employers or their representatives should greet the workers in a manner that respects physical and social distancing; people should remain at least 2 meters apart. As such, handshakes and hugs are not permitted. All communication must be in a language that the workers understand. This may require hiring a translator as well as providing written documents in a language that the worker understands. An information package, available at <https://hnhu.org/health-topic/covid-19-farms/>, must be provided to workers at the time of arrival. This package includes fact sheets related to COVID-19, hand hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, signage and cleaning logs.

## Requirement: Submit Worker Arrival Information

Within 24 hours of arrival at the isolation residence, the following information must be submitted to HNHU via the new online fillable form (<https://hnhu.org/forms/farm-worker-arrival-form/>):

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Names of the workers               | ✓ Name/identifier of the isolation residence (e.g. Bunkhouse 1, Starlight Hotel Rm. 123) |
| ✓ Country of origin                  |  |
| ✓ Arrival date and time              |  |
| ✓ Address of the isolation residence |  |

# Standards for Isolation Residences

The isolation residence may be a bunkhouse, trailer, hotel or motel. The agricultural enterprise may utilize one or multiple types of residences. These residences can be located at the agricultural enterprise or at a remote location.

**As a reminder, whether the isolation residence is within Haldimand-Norfolk or not, if the residence will be housing any worker that will be living and/or working within Haldimand-Norfolk, that residence must be included within an Isolation Plan Application submitted to, and approved by, the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.**

The isolation plan must achieve the following objectives:

- A maximum of three workers are assigned to any self-isolation residence that is a bunkhouse or trailer.
- Where a farmer wishes to partition off an existing bunkhouse so that two independent units are created, the units must each contain a separate entrance, washroom, kitchen and sleeping space. These proposals must be included in your isolation plan and will be reviewed by a Public Health Inspector prior to providing approval for use.
- Where there is more than one bed in a bedroom, 2 metres between beds (frame-to-frame) is required. Physical markings should be used to visually indicate this 2 metres space requirement has been achieved. It is important that workers be informed not to move beds for infection control purposes.
- While single beds are preferred, bunk beds may be used. Where bunk beds are used, workers must sleep in opposite direction of one another (head-to-toe orientation).
- Where a hotel room will be used as an isolation residence, one worker per room is permitted.
- All the supplies required to meet human needs for three days should be stocked at the self-isolation residence. This includes food, water, medicines and other personal items.
- Each worker must be provided with food consumption supplies such as plates, cups and utensils. These supplies must not be shared with others.
- Workers must be provided with household cleaning and hand hygiene supplies.

## Expectations During the Isolation Period

- Employers shall ensure workers remain in self-isolation for a 14 day period in residences approved in the isolation plan(s).
- The self-isolation period (Day 0) starts from the time of arrival at the isolation residence.
- All workers must remain in the residence. The worker cannot leave the residence except for medical treatment.
- **A residence may include an outdoor area that is proximate to the isolation unit. Please note that departure and arrival to this place must be consistent with self-isolation. This includes identifying a clearly defined demarcated area. Travel to and from this outdoor area must ensure that there is no contact with any other person (except an individual(s) who is/are sharing the self-isolation residence).**
- **In cases where the isolation unit is a hotel, outdoor areas use will NOT be permitted.**
- If an isolation residence is a “bunkhouse”, all the other regulatory requirements remain in effect. Please see the Seasonal Housing Guidelines for reference.
- If an isolation residence is a trailer, the amenities and accommodation standards should be similar to that of a bunkhouse.
- During the isolation period the workers should have access to laundry facilities in the isolation residence. If this not possible, the employer must make arrangements for laundry service to be provided.
- During the isolation period groceries or prepared meals from an approved source such as a commercial grocery store or other food premise inspected by public health, must be delivered to workers, as well as toiletries, medications and other essential items. Every effort should be made to allow for the provision of contactless delivery of these services. Where there is the opportunity for interaction, physical distancing requirements must be maintained.
- **Workers shall be provided** with general information regarding COVID-19 (e.g. symptoms, transmission and personal precautions), instructions on what to do if they feel sick, applicable phone numbers for medical treatment, and the address of where they are located.
- If the isolation residence is a hotel, there should be disclosure and dialogue between the agricultural enterprise and hotel



management. In-room housekeeping services cannot be provided. However, linens, towels and other supplies must be provided.

- Employers must ensure workers have access to a telephone for the duration of the isolation period. Where possible, it is recommended workers have access to internet services.
- Each worker must be provided a thermometer. These must not be shared. Reusable thermometers must be cleaned and sanitized before and after use.
- Employers must have a plan for ill workers. This should include having a separate “back-up” isolation unit to house ill persons.

## Monitoring for Adherence

The agricultural enterprise is responsible for monitoring for adherence. An adherence monitoring plan must be articulated. This includes daily communication with the workers, alongside conducting daily wellness checks. If any workers are seriously ill and require immediate attention, they should be instructed to call 911 and be transported to the hospital. If the worker’s illness is less serious, the employer must arrange for medical care. This must be completed in a manner that maintains physical and social distancing.

**The health unit must be informed immediately if a worker becomes ill. Please contact us by calling the COVID-19 Hotline at 519-426-6170 ext. 9999. If needing to report an ill worker after-hours, please call 1-877-298-5888 to speak to an on-call Public Health Inspector.**

## Wellness Checks

Daily wellness checks must be conducted by a member of the agricultural enterprise for all workers who are in self-isolation. It is strongly recommended to complete these wellness checks in-person while respecting physical distancing requirements. In-person (visual) wellness checks are the most effective way to confirm how the workers are doing. Reassure the workers that being forthcoming with any symptoms is extremely important, and they will not be penalized or sent home. Their health, and the health of all their co-workers is the top priority.

**These wellness checks must now be submitted to the EHT hotline ([ehthotline@hnhss.ca](mailto:ehthotline@hnhss.ca)) on Day 7 as well as upon conclusion of the isolation period on Day 14 (after the time at which the workers arrived to the isolation unit on Day 0).**

Upon receipt of the wellness checks on Day 14, HNHU will determine if the self-isolation period was satisfactory. A confirmation of all workers released will be sent via email.

**Please note: Workers must not exit isolation or begin work until the confirmation email has been received.**

## Enforcement

The HNHU is committed to working with employers to maintain adherence. Consistent with law and regulations, enforcement actions will be initiated to address non-compliance. All locations will be subjected to random audits by HNHU staff.

## Post Isolation

Once workers have successfully completed their 14 day isolation, they may move to their assigned living accommodation and begin work. Please continue to practice COVID-19 precautions with your workers even after they are out of isolation.

- Where there is more than one bed in a bedroom, 2 metres between beds (frame-to-frame) is required. Physical markings should be used to visually indicate this 2 metres space requirement. It is important that workers be informed not to move beds for infection control purposes.
- Continue to monitor the health of your workers. Be sure they are comfortable with reporting any new symptoms and know who to notify.
- Encourage your workers to practice hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and social distancing.
- Workers should continue to avoid sharing household items (e.g. utensils, cups, bedding, and towels) as well as not sharing cigarettes, vaping products or other items exposed to saliva/ respiratory droplets.



- Schedule meals, showers and laundry times to limit the number of workers in a room.
- Ensure workers have the supplies (e.g. toiletries, cleaning products) and direction needed to frequently clean and disinfect surfaces. High touch surfaces such as door handles, light switches, faucets, TV remotes, phones, and counters should be frequently cleaned and disinfected.
- Continue to transport workers in a manner that helps with social distancing. If transported by bus the workers should be separated by two rows. If a private car is used, the workers should be in the back seat with the windows open (if possible).
- Ensure your workers are aware of COVID-19 restrictions in the community.
- Keep your workers informed of the changing situation.

After the 14 day isolation is over; if a worker reports having COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath:

- a. Ensure the ill worker stops working immediately and is isolated.
- b. Notify the health unit by calling 519-426-6170 ext. 9999. After business hours, call 1-877-298-5888.
- c. If you need to take the ill worker to the hospital, call ahead to report to the medical facility before taking them to the medical facility. This allows the medical facility to make arrangements for a suspect COVID-19 case. When transporting them to the hospital:
  - i. The ill worker should sit in the back seat of the vehicle.
  - ii. Only one person and the ill worker should be in the vehicle.
  - iii. Lower the windows, if possible.
  - iv. Masks must be worn by the ill worker and by the driver.
- d. Workers should be isolated for 14 days from the onset of illness.
- e. If the worker's symptoms last for more than 14 days, the worker should remain isolated until 24 hours after the symptoms have resolved.
- f. Ensure there is adequate food and water provided for the worker. The worker should not be allowed to go to the store.
- g. If the worker's symptoms worsen, please follow the actions in section c.
- h. If the worker is tested positive for COVID-19, a list of close contacts should be provided to the health unit upon request
- i. The worker must be cleared to return to work or leave the country by the health unit.

# Receiving Transfers

If your agricultural enterprise will be receiving any workers via transfer in 2021, you must notify the HNHU within 24 hours of their arrival to the farm. This can be done by completing our online fillable form, found at <https://hnhu.org/forms/farm-worker-arrival-form/>.

Updated February 2021

Version 1



environmentalhealth@hnhss.ca  
www.hnhss.ca



## Simcoe

P.O. Box 570,  
12 Gilbertson Drive  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4N5  
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623

## Caledonia

100 Haddington Street  
Caledonia, ON N3W 2N4  
905.318.6623

## Dunnville

117 Forest Street East  
Dunnville, ON N1A 1B9  
905.318.6623