

## Q&A FOR FARM COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLANS

### ***Do all Minnesota farms need a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan?***

- Under Executive Order 20-74, all critical sector businesses are required to have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Farms are critical sector businesses.
- The purpose of developing a plan is to ensure that critical business owners, including farms, examine their operations and take the necessary steps and precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among family members, employees, and customers.
- You can find a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template on the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) website [www.dli.mn.gov/updates](http://www.dli.mn.gov/updates). This template includes all required plan components and is available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. You are not required to use the DLI template, if all components outlined in this template are addressed in your plan. Other templates are available, such as this [produce farm-specific plan](#) from the University of Minnesota Extension.
- The plan template is customizable to your operation. You can use one of the templates provided (below in Resources) or you can write up your own. It doesn't take an extraordinary amount of time to create a plan. Focus on the key areas of your operation where you need to practice social distancing, wear masks, or implement other measures to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- You will not be required to submit your COVID-19 Preparedness Plan to DLI, but you should be able to produce it if asked for it.

### ***What is the deadline for implementing a plan?***

- The deadline for having a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in place is no later than June 29, 2020.

### ***Why does my farm need a plan?***

- Farms, farmers' markets, and other agricultural businesses were designated critical businesses under Executive Order 20-48, in April 2020. Non-critical businesses that are now reopening are required to have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan – and in order to ensure the health and safety of all Minnesotans during this pandemic, those critical/essential businesses that have been operating all along should have a plan.
- The purpose of creating a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is to ensure the health and safety of farm families, farm workers, and customers of ag-related businesses during the pandemic.
- Your health and safety can be better ensured with a Preparedness Plan that complies with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) COVID-19 guidelines and OSHA standards.

- Farms with employees and those who invite customers on-site should have a plan in place to ensure the health and safety of their families, their employees, and their customers.
- In your plan, you should address all the guidance requirements applicable to your operation as set out in each of the components listed (in the template). If the actions indicated in the template apply to your business, then they are required – unless it is clearly indicated that an action included in the guidance is recommended.
- The completed preparedness plan is not required to be submitted to the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) for approval but needs to be made available upon request. **The emphasis is more about keeping Minnesotans healthy and safe and less on enforcement.**
- You must ensure the plan is posted in readily accessible locations that will allow for the plan to be viewed by family members, workers, and customers associated with your business. There are templates available on the DLI website in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

### ***What is the penalty for not having a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan?***

- State or local authorities could determine your business is out of compliance with the Executive Order(s) and you could be required to come into compliance.
- Under existing law, Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) has the authority to enforce MNOSHA Standards and MDH and CDC Guidelines as applied to workers, including social distancing and hygiene practices.
- MNOSHA may issue citations, civil penalties, or closure orders to places of employment with unsafe or unhealthy conditions, and MNOSHA may penalize businesses that retaliate against employees who raise safety and health concerns. MNOSHA's authority extends to farms with 11 or more employees.
- An employer's failure to develop or implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is an example of an adverse work condition that, under Minnesota law, may qualify an employee who quits for unemployment insurance benefits.

### ***What resources are available to assist me in developing a plan for my farm?***

- COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template/[Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry](#) (DLI): This plan includes all required plan components and is available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish. Your farm may use other templates, such as this [produce farm-specific plan](#) from the University of Minnesota Extension, if all components outlined in the DLI template are addressed.
- For additional information or assistance in developing a plan, businesses can contact Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) Workplace Safety Consultation at 651-284-5060 or [osha.consultation@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.consultation@state.mn.us).
- Stay Safe Guidance for Food and Agriculture Businesses <https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/food-agriculture.jsp>.
- For more COVID-19 resources specific to farms, visit [MDA COVID-19 Food and Agriculture](#).
- Questions may be sent to [MDAResponds@state.mn.us](mailto:MDAResponds@state.mn.us).