Meat and Poultry Processing Facilities:
Key Strategies to Prevent COVID-19 Infection among Employees

Employers should assess their workplace for factors that might increase the risk of spreading COVID-19. Develop a health and safety plan using the following prevention guidance. Reach out frequently to state and/or local public health officials and occupational safety and health professionals to get relevant and up-to-date information concerning COVID-19 in your area.

- **Keep employees at least 6 feet away from each other as much as possible (encourage social distancing).** Use physical barriers or partitions, reduce staffing, or modify workstations or work procedures to increase the distance between employees. Add additional clock in/out stations, space out chairs in break rooms, and add outside tents for breaks.

- **Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection and make sure there is adequate ventilation in shared spaces.** Clean and disinfect tools or other equipment at least as often as employees change workstations. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in workspaces, break rooms, and shuttle buses or vans if used, at the end of each shift, or more frequently. Redirect or remove fans to prevent air from blowing directly from one worker to another. If fans are removed, employers should take steps to prevent heat hazards.

- **Screen employees for potential COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the workplace.** Consult with state and local health officials and occupational medicine professionals on screening procedures. Send employees with symptoms home immediately, encourage them to self-isolate at home (if possible), and contact a healthcare provider. Provide information on when they can return to work.

- **Promote proper hand hygiene.** Provide access to running water, soap, paper towels, and trash cans (no-touch trash cans if available). Have employees wash hands for at least 20 seconds. Place hand washing or hand sanitizer stations in multiple locations. Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- **Encourage sick employees to stay home.** Develop policies that allow sick employees to stay at home without loss of incentives. Ensure employees are aware of and understand these policies. Work with occupational medicine professionals to develop policies for workers who may be at increased risk related to COVID-19.
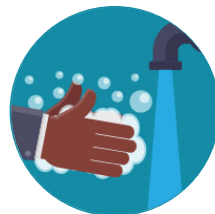
- **Encourage employees to practice social distancing.** Stagger break times and arrival and departure times. Place visual reminders (floor markings and signs) where employees might gather, including work areas, break areas, locker rooms, halls or corridors, and entrances and exit areas. Encourage employees to avoid carpooling to and from work. If carpooling is necessary, limit the number of people per vehicle as much as possible. This may require using more vehicles. Encourage employees in a shared van or car space to wear cloth face coverings.

- **Consider providing cloth face coverings and/or face shields.** Ensure face coverings are worn properly (snugly over the nose and mouth). Provide washable coverings with multiple layers of fabric. Replace when wet, dirty, or contaminated. Face coverings are not a substitute for recommended or required PPE such as respirators or medical facemasks. Train employees on how to put on and take off PPE without contaminating themselves. Clean and disinfect face shields after each shift if used. Make sure face shields extend past the chin and wrap around the sides of the face.

- **Educate and train employees and supervisors on how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19.** Cover topics like staying home when sick, social distancing, how to wear cloth face coverings, and proper hand hygiene. Provide materials in an easy to understand format and in appropriate languages. CDC has posters available for download.

cdc.gov/coronavirus