

COVID-19 UPDATE



GOVERNOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES EXPANDED ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEE PROTECTIONS

Last week, Governor Gavin Newsom announced new employee protection campaign that expands safeguards for California essential workers. His protection plan covers four main areas outlined below.

Helping Workers Isolate and Quarantine

Providing safe, suitable places for isolation outside a home can help stop the spread to other household members, especially for those who live in multigenerational households. The state will allocate existing federal funds to local public health departments and community-based organizations to assist with supportive services for isolation and quarantine.

A new program, "Housing for the Harvest" will provide temporary isolation spaces for agricultural employees who test positive or were exposed to the virus. The goal is to limit the risk of spreading COVID-19 to their coworkers or households. This program will operate in partnership with counties and local partners in the Central Valley, Central Coast, and Imperial Valley - the regions with the highest number of agricultural workers.

Outreach and Education

Governor Newsom announced California's public awareness campaign to #WearAMask and #StoptheSpread, the campaign will expand its reach to employers, to workers and to their families. Below are radio spots for essential workers released by the state about how employees can safely transition from work to home here:

- [Essential Workers \(English\)](#).
- [Essential Workers \(Spanish\)](#).

Support for Employees

Governor Newsom said he will work with the Legislature to build on previous executive action and advance worker protections such as expanded paid sick leave and access to workers' compensation.

Employer Resources

An Employer Playbook was released today will guide businesses throughout the state on how to provide a clean environment for workers and customers to reduce risk. Additionally, the state will provide employers information to share with their workers regarding health insurers' COVID-19 testing coverage and eligibility requirements.

Enforcement

Cal/OSHA and the Labor Commissioner's office have strategically targeted investigations in high-risk industries, where the state has seen the most workplace outbreaks. Expedited enforcement authority and advanced reporting of health and safety hazards at work will improve enforcement outcomes. Businesses will be required to report outbreaks to their local health departments will help track county transmission. This enforcement authority has not been established yet.

To view the complete announcement, [click here.](#)

COVID-19 EMPLOYER PLAYBOOK FOR SAFE REOPENING

In July 24, 2020, the State of California released the "COVID-19 Employer Playbook for a Safe Reopening." According to the playbook, its purpose is to help employers "plan and prepare for reopening their businesses and to support a safe, clean environment for workers and customers." The Employer Playbook's table of contents lists four major areas that the playbook addresses: (1) steps employers can take to open safely; (2) what to do if a COVID-19 case occurs in the workplace; (3) enforcement and compliance; and (4) worker education. In addition, the playbook includes three appendixes consisting of employer and worker resources, enforcement and compliance contacts, and case studies illustrating the playbook's principles.

To view a copy of the complete document, please [click here.](#)

FARMERS TO FAMILIES FOOD BOX ROUND 3 SOLICITATION

As part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Secretary Perdue announced on April 17, the U.S. Department of Food & Agriculture (USDA) is exercising authority under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to purchase and distribute agricultural products to those in need. Through this program, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is partnering with national, regional and local distributors, whose workforces have been significantly impacted by the closure of restaurants, hotels and other food service businesses, to purchase up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products from American producers of all sizes.

The program will supply food boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meat products and a combination box of fresh produce, dairy or meat products. Distributors will package these products into family-sized boxes, then transport them to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. The first round of purchases totaling up to \$1.2 billion occurred from May 15 through June 30, 2020. The second round will aim to purchase up to \$1.47 billion July 1 through August 31, 2020. AMS may elect to extend the period of performance of the contracts, via option periods, dependent upon program success and available remaining funds, up to \$3 billion.

For additional details, please [click here.](#)