

COVID-19 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AT MILK COLLECTION CENTRES (MCC) AND FARM WORKPLACES

Scope and purpose

To provide guidance on standard requirements and protocols to mitigate and control the COVID-19 hazard and spread of COVID-19 at the MCC and Farm workplaces. This SOP applies to MCC staff, farmers and visitors.

Background

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It can affect all aspects of life, including travel, food supplies, trade and disrupt workplaces.

To reduce / prevent the impact of COVID-19 on MCCs, farms and people it is important to plan and have procedures to address exposure risks, sources of exposure and routes of transmission.

Symptoms and signs of COVID-19

- Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness.
- Symptoms appear 2 – 14 days after being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The following symptoms may develop after exposure to someone or surfaces that has COVID-19.



- Generally, infection can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-time conditions like diabetes, cancer and lung disease.

Note that it is not always obvious that a person who presents with the above symptoms is infected. Infection can only be confirmed after taking a COVID-19 test.

! It is important for MCC staff, farm workers or visitors to take a test if they have the above signs and symptoms to rule out or confirm COVID-19.

How COVID-19 can be spread at the MCC or farm

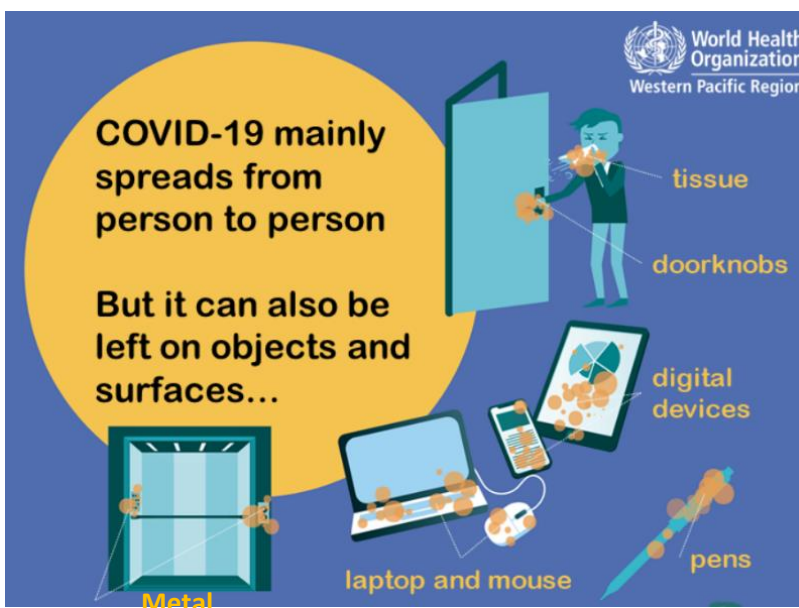
- Droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes containing the virus are the main means of transmission.
- The spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is **close contact of two (2) meters or less with an infected person** or **direct contact with an infected surface**.
- The risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Why close contact?



- Droplets from coughs, sneezes or when speaking loudly can travel up to 2 metres.
- If you are close to a person infected with COVID-19 you could inhale these droplets which can then infect you.

Why contact with surfaces?



- It is also possible that someone may become infected by touching a surface, or object that has been in contact with an infected person. Or that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions.
- You could pick up the virus on your hands and then become infected when touching your own mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Possible surfaces include:
 - ✓ Buckets, Milk cans and other metal items;
 - ✓ Door handles;

The 3 C's: Situations when there is a higher risk of exposure:



Areas with higher risk of exposure are:

- Closed spaces with poor ventilation, e.g. MCC buildings
- Crowded places, e.g. peak delivery times for milk
- Close contact settings, e.g. during milk reception
- **Efforts should focus on minimising the 3 C's and ensuring good hygiene.**

Procedures to reduce / prevent exposure to COVID-19 at the MCC and farm

Managers should prevent access to MCCs or farms by persons with signs of COVID-19.

A. Reducing the 3 C's

1. Keep your distance:

- Arrange work areas to ensure minimum contact of 2 meters between everyone (staff and visitors).
- Where 2 meters social distancing rule cannot be applied, install physical barriers such as a tape or rope at the milk tank room entrance to prevent farmers entering.
- Post signage to remind people to maintain their distance when interacting.

2. Limit the number of people in the same place at the same time

- Ensure only authorized personnel (staff or farmers) are present at the MCC or farm.
- Ensure farmers adhere to milk schedules and that they do not overstay after delivering milk.
- Limit the number of farmers at the milk receiving point at one time.
- Stagger mealtimes such as tea and lunch breaks to avoid close contact.
- Minimise the number of passengers in any vehicle.

3. Avoid physical contact

- Avoid shaking hands, hugging and touching your face.
- Avoid eating shared foods especially from communal plates.
- Avoid face-to-face formal gatherings of any kind i.e. round table meetings.

4. Ensure good ventilation

- Keep windows and doors open in both buildings and vehicles.
- Avoid gatherings in enclosed spaces or small rooms.

5. Re-organise schedules so that work can be carried out whilst avoiding the 3 Cs

- People who are high risk such as over 60 years and those with known pre-existing health conditions must be encouraged to take leave or break from MCC work.
- Encourage those who can work from home, e.g. Board members, to work from home.

B. Cleaning and disinfection protocols

Equipment

- Sanitise all equipment and devices before use.
- All milk cans must be sprayed with 70% alcohol sanitizer before opening upon arrival at the MCC.
- All equipment such as milk testing kits, calculators, tables and seats must be sanitized daily with a minimum sanitizer of 70% alcohol.

People

- Everyone must wash hands with soap and water on arrival at the MCC and before entering a working area.
- During milking time, farmers must wash hands before, after milking and during breaks.
- MCC staff and farmers must wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Where water is not available MCC staff and farmers must regularly and thoroughly clean their hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70% alcohol minimum).
- After every hand wash, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth and risk surfaces.
- After each delivery of milk, both the milk receptionist and farmer must wash and sanitize hands.

Places

- MCC staff must clean and disinfect high contact areas at least two times a day, such as washrooms, water taps, doorknobs and handles.
- Clean and disinfect affected surfaces as soon as possible after a known exposure to a person with respiratory symptoms such as coughing and sneezing.

Avoid or reduce on sharing of items

- The use of equipment involving multiple users must be as far as possible avoided such as calculators, stirring rods, pens, computer keyboards.
- Avoid using other people's phones, cups, cutlery, tables and offices where possible.
- Avoid sharing teat dip, lubricants and other milking utensils with unwashed hands or dirty gloves.

Disinfection and rubbish disposal



- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wear nitrile or vinyl disposable gloves when working with hazards, or cleaning and disinfecting.
- Safely discard gloves after each use.
- Provide tissue and secured trash bins at the MCC or farm.

C. Personal protective equipment (PPE)

General principles

- PPE is considered to be the last line of defence to be used only when hand washing, and social distance is inevitable.
- Wearing of PPE shall not be used in place of the physical distancing at the MCC and farm.
- Wearing of gloves is not a substitution for hand washing.

REMEMBER gloves can become contaminated similar to your hands. Wearing them can give a false sense of security.

- Gloves may increase the spread of COVID-19 if not used properly at the MCC.
- Be diligent regarding use of PPE (e.g. gloves, face masks). Where possible, conserve available supply, to minimize running out.

Masking up

- Face masks can stop infected people from expelling droplets and uninfected people from inhaling them.
- All MCC staff, farmers and visitors should wear face masks which cover their mouth and nose.
- Remember to replace masks when soiled and wash cloth masks regularly.
- Face shields may be worn where there is a high farmer traffic interaction by milk receptionists.

Always remember to wash hands after removing PPE.

D. Know you you've been in contact with

- Keep a visitors' book. Record the names and contact details of everyone who visits the MCC / farm and the date and time of their visit.

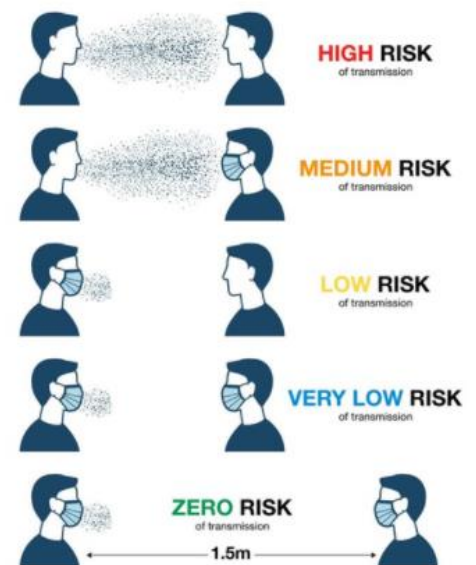
E. What to do if an employee or visitor has symptoms

- People with symptoms associated with COVID-19 should stay at home. They should contact their local health professional for advice and take a test if it is recommended to do so.
- Everyone should follow Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines regarding the need to isolate or have follow up tests.

MCC or farm employees with symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19

- MCC and farm managers should make sure staff with COVID-19 symptoms take sick leave.
- If staff test positive for COVID-19 the farm / MCC manager should inform other workers or farmers.
- All areas of the farm or MCC that the infected employee was in contact with should be disinfected.
- Other people (e.g. farmers, visitors) should be informed and told to watch out for symptoms, or take a test if they had been in close or prolonged contact with the affected employee, or had not been taking COVID-19 precautions.
- Advice on other measures to take should be sought from the local health professional.

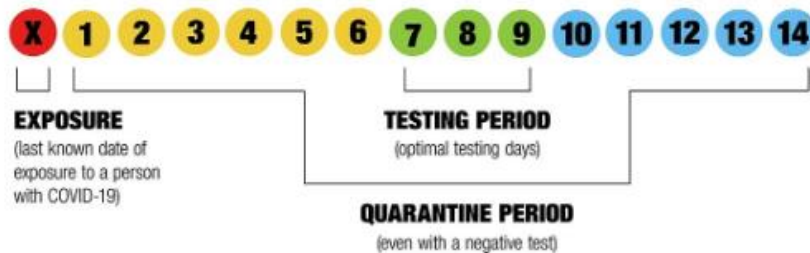
How effective are face masks?



Visitors to farms or MCCs (includes farmers) with symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19

- People with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate and avoid visiting the MCC or other farms.

Notes on testing



- The incubation period of COVID-19 is fourteen (14) days. This is the time it can take for a person to show symptoms.
- The optimal time for testing is seven (7) to nine (9) days after exposure.
- Further advice is available from your local health professional or testing centre.

F. Giving first aid and treatment during COVID-19

REMEMBER the first aid provider should ensure their own health and safety prior to carrying out first aid.

- Before attending the scene assess remotely, what occurred, what level of intervention is required, to what extent there is reason to believe there is a risk of COVID-19.
- **ALWAYS** use general COVID-19 precautions: wear a mask, gloves and where possible maintain a distance of two (2) metres.
- Help the injured person to the extent reasonable, including providing comfort and reassurance.
- If the injury is minor, suggest that the injured self-treat. The first aider can provide guidance and supplies from at least 2 metres away.
- If the injury is major call for an ambulance. Continue giving first aid until help arrives.
- Minimize contact with materials and equipment when providing first aid.
- Minimize the number of first aiders and other people in direct contact with the injured individual.
- Minimize contact with bodily fluids, saliva and respiratory droplets.
- Safely discard all disposable PPE following use or contamination.
- Wash hands and all affected surfaces with warm water and detergent and sanitize.

Seven Steps of MCC /farm entry and leaving

1. Wear a mask before entering an MCC or farm.
2. Wash hands with soap or sanitize.
3. If delivering milk wash can or sanitize.
4. Keep social distance when interacting with others.
5. Avoid touching surfaces.
6. Safely dispose of any PPE before leaving the farm or MCC.
7. Wash your hands before leaving.

Diagrams taken from awareness raising materials prepared by the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organisation (WHO), University of Colorado (United States), Gannawara Shire Council (Australia), City of Burlington, Vermont