

Screening Employees for COVID-19, 4-20-2020

In order to ensure the ongoing safety of the pork industry workforce, some employers have moved to screening their employees upon arrival at the farm using guidance from the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) (EEOC). The EEOC has provided guidance in a publication entitled ***Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans With Disabilities Act***, that can help employers implement strategies to navigate the impact of COVID-19 in the workplace. It has been updated as of March 19, 2020 to address examples and information regarding COVID-19; **the new 2020 information appears in bold**. According to EEOC, the following steps may be used to identify employees who are potentially positive for COVID-19, based on the most common signs of the disease. Employers should be aware that some people with COVID-19 do not have a fever.

Some employers are screening employees using the following steps: measuring body temperature and conducting a symptom check.

1. Body Temperature

According to [the Mayo Clinic](#), there are multiple types of thermometers (e.g., infrared gun, or digital, oral or aural) available for use. Select a thermometer type that works best for your farm and employees. Remember to refer to the manufacturer's directions for proper use. The following tips include those recommended within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [CARE Kit](#), which was developed for travelers, but contains good information about taking temperatures:

- Fever is defined as 100.4 F (38 C) or higher. Keep in mind there is some evidence to suggest that not everyone with COVID-19 will have a fever.
- Before taking a temperature, it is recommended to wait 30 minutes after eating, drinking, working or exercising.
- Note that some medications can lower body temperatures.
- Because this is a medical examination, the results need to be kept confidential.

2. Symptom Check

According to EEOC's [What you Should Know the ADA, Rehabilitation Act, and COVID-19](#), while taking temperatures, you may also consider asking employees about their current signs/symptoms of illness. Respiratory signs, such as cough and shortness of breath, are most commonly associated with COVID-19.

If an employee reports respiratory signs or has a fever verified by the temperature check, send them home and encourage them to contact their healthcare provider for medical advice and next steps. Employers may also consider reaching out to their [state public health veterinarian](#) (SPHV) or [local health department](#) (LHD) for assistance in determining next steps, including whether to apply or lift quarantine/isolation requirements as outlined in the CDC's [Ending Home Isolation](#) guidance.

Screening should take place prior to entry on the farm, or through self-reporting. Use what makes sense for your facility and farm's biosecurity practices. The following are adapted from the [Practical biosecurity recommendations to prevent COVID-19 in farm workers and allied operations](#), made available by the Swine Disease Eradication Center at the University of Minnesota.

- Designate an area where employees wait to be screened, either through a drive up or before entering the farm or facility.
- Stagger the arrival of employees to enable social distancing.
- Employees may also self-report their temperature and signs to their employer, prior to their onsite arrival.