

## COVID-19 Guidance—NDSU Ag Affairs

### Overarching Guidance

- Employees must follow applicable Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and North Dakota Department of Health (NDDOH) guidelines
- Prior to re-opening or having public visitors, each location is required to complete the [NDDOH Work Place Assessment tool](#). This applies to all county offices, RECs and other off campus locations.
  - For county offices, your district director will review the completed assessment and determine approval. For RECs, the Experiment Station director will review the completed assessment and determine approval.
- To the fullest extent possible, flexible hours and flexible worksites (remote work) are strongly encouraged. Specific questions and arrangements regarding remote work will be addressed by the employee's immediate supervisor, as well as the appropriate REC director, district director, or department heads/chairs/director.
- County offices may resume normal work schedules congruent with guidance from the county.

### Guidance for Meetings and Events

- For meetings and events personnel should follow the color-coded classification system provided by the [ND Department of Health](#).
- This guidance includes pesticide trainings and exams, 4-H activities (including 4-H club meetings, team practices, and other 4-H events led by volunteers), individual on-farm visits, programs taught by volunteers and all events sponsored by NDSU Extension or carried out by Extension staff as well as other outreach activities conducted by departments, RECs, and other NDSU Ag Affairs entities.
- Local county and tribal Extension offices and RECs may engage in outdoor activities using the following guidelines and in compliance with the [ND Smart Restart guidance for large group gatherings](#) and congruent with the attendance and occupancy limits for the color-coded designation in the county where the event is being held.
- For outdoor events:
  - Social distancing strictly adhered to, including transportation to plot tours.
  - Food and beverages may be served in congruence with the color-coded designation for the county where the event is held.
    - [Restaurant Standards](#)
    - Food options such as boxed lunches are strongly encouraged.
  - Consider alternative formats for vulnerable populations.
  - Portable restrooms and/or frequent cleaning of restrooms in facilities at least every 2 hours.
  - Strongly discourage inviting speakers and participants from areas with widespread community spread of COVID-19.
- For indoor events:
  - Social distancing must be strictly adhered to.

- Food and beverages may be served congruent with the color-coded designation for the county where the event or meeting is held.
  - [Restaurant Standards](#)
  - Food options such as boxed lunches are strongly encouraged.
- Consider alternative formats for vulnerable populations.
- Frequent cleaning of restrooms in facilities at least every 2 hours.

#### **For all events**

- All events must comply and operate within the confines of any applicable local health unit restriction.
- Advertising for all events must strongly caution attendees in susceptible categories of the relative risk of attending.
- Events that involve more than 50 people must be reviewed and approved by your department head, REC director, or district director prior to the event. This review will include applicable safety protocols, advertising, and other applicable items.
- No events should be held that specifically recruit participants from susceptible demographics.
- For NDSU Extension sponsored events, such as 4-H activities involving volunteers, transportation of non-household members is at the discretion of the driver. Consult [CDC guidance related to COVID-19 and transportation](#), including use of personal vehicles.
- Gatherings planned at the 4-H club/group level involving more than 50 participants (adults and youth) must submit a written "one-time blanket request" to their local Extension agent that they will resume in-person meetings following Phase II guidelines. This request will cover all gatherings of this group for the 2020-2021 4-H year, ending August 31, 2021. Documentation of this approval must be made available upon the request of the Extension agent's supervisor.

#### **Guidance for Employee Travel for all locations**

- At the onset of the pandemic, Ag Affairs personnel were instructed that only one person per vehicle was allowed to reduce the risk of spreading COVID.
- Unit leaders (REC directors and district directors) are authorized to allow multiple people within their supervision to travel in the same vehicle. Campus personnel must have authorization from the VP for Ag Affairs to allow multiple people to travel in the same vehicle. This is not a unilateral guidance and unit leaders and the Vice President will evaluate each situation on its own merits. Factors to consider in this decision include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - The relative risk of COVID transmission vs the relative risk of miles driven, multiple drivers traveling to a worksite, and the resulting risk of a motor vehicle accident.
  - The relative risk of multiple members of the same work crews being potentially exposed to COVID and potentially requiring isolation and/or quarantine.
  - The overall health and safety of your workforce and any underlying health conditions that may potentially contribute to increased risk for employees under your supervision.
  - The need for additional safety measures including precautions such as requiring masks while traveling.

- Other factors related to the COVID risk include whether your locale continues to have ‘widespread community spread’ of COVID-19.

### **Guidance related to Employee Health and Safety**

- The health and safety of our employees is of utmost importance.
- Employees who are in demographic categories that have increased susceptibility to COVID-19 may opt out of face-to-face activities if proper safety measures cannot be implemented that will reduce their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
  - Examples of susceptible categories include, but are not limited to age, underlying health conditions such as diabetes or heart disease, and living with or caring for another individual with these conditions.
- Your direct supervisor will review your situation and work with you to help plan activities and workplace guidelines which can help reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- These measures may include remote participation, partnering with neighboring units or counties, split work shifts, or other reasonable accommodations.

Please be advised that the pandemic has and will continue to result in rapidly changing conditions. This guidance is subject to change and a return to heightened restrictions with little advanced notice.

### **Face Coverings**

NDSU Ag Affairs campus units and the programs and events sponsored by our units on campus, will comply with the [face covering guidelines](#) issued by NDSU on July 31. These guidelines state that face coverings must be worn indoors and outdoors when on the **NDSU campus**. When outdoors on the NDSU campus, if 6 feet distancing can be maintained, you are encouraged but not required to wear a face covering.

**County programs and REC’s** will follow the “NDSU Extension COVID-19 County/Tribal Programs and REC Risk Guidance” document based on the color-coded risk guidance system from the Smart Restart Guidelines. Stricter requirements by the local health department, municipality, county, tribe, REC or venues supersede guidance in this document.

**For all color classifications, we are aligning Ag Affairs guidance as closely as possible with the Smart Restart Guidelines.**

If you are off campus representing NDSU, please follow the policy of your [location](#).

### **Updated Guidance for counties in the Green Smart Restart**

All Events (Indoors and Outdoors)

- Maximum of 300 people or 80% room occupancy (whichever is less and with appropriate social distancing)
- For events larger than 50 people, plans must be reviewed and approved by your district director, REC director, or department head or chair.

### **Updated Guidance for counties in the Yellow Smart Restart**

#### All Events (Indoors and Outdoors)

- Maximum of 200 people or 65% room occupancy (whichever is less and with appropriate social distancing)
- For events larger than 50 people, plans must be reviewed and approved by your district director, REC director, or department head or chair.

### **Updated Guidance for counties in the Orange Smart Restart**

#### All Events (Indoors and Outdoors)

- Maximum of 150 people or 50% room occupancy (whichever is less and with appropriate social distancing)
- Plans for any event in these counties involving non-employees (e.g. Extension meetings, field days, etc.) must be reviewed and approved by your district director, REC director, or department head or chair.
  - Plan must include
    - A description of the critical nature of the event and why it must be held in person rather than virtually.
    - A description of the steps being taken to reduce the risk of COVID transmission.
- Consider not serving meals at events. If meals are necessary to conduct the event, serve boxed lunches only.
- Personnel are strongly encouraged to consider virtual options for meetings and events.