
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
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COVID-19 Joint Information Centre
Ministry of Agriculture

Temporary foreign workers self-isolating in government-managed accommodations

VICTORIA – All temporary foreign workers (TFWs) arriving in British Columbia for seasonal farm work will be required to self-isolate in government-managed accommodations for 14 days prior to being transported to farms throughout B.C. during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Province will fund hotel and food-service costs during the 14-day self-isolation period – the accommodation will be in the Lower Mainland near the airport and will not be at the farm workplace. The Province is also providing access to socio-economic and cultural supports for workers while they self-isolate.

TFWs will need to monitor their conditions during self-isolation – if symptoms like a cough, shortness of breath or fever develop, they will need to call the public health authority or 811.

Following 14 days of self-isolation, if no symptoms develop (or once the employee is fully recovered if symptoms do develop), workers will be safely transported to their farm. If TFWs have questions or concerns about their rights, they will be able to contact workplace health and safety offices or employment standards offices.

Employers are responsible for paying temporary foreign workers for a minimum 30 hours per week during self-isolation, and at the rate of pay specified on the federal Labour Market Impact Assessment. This is consistent with the TFW program's genuineness policy, which indicates that reasonable employment needs are a full-time workload (i.e., a minimum of 30 hours per week).

TFWs are expected to comply with the orders and recommendations put in place by the provincial health officer as part of the B.C. government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, all farms will need to complete a COVID-19 infection prevention protocol, and be subject to a provincial inspection, before being able to accept temporary foreign workers.

Before departing their country of origin, TFWs will be screened by the airline and federal government for COVID-19 symptoms and will not be permitted to travel to Canada until they are asymptomatic.

Upon arrival in Canada, TFWs who have travelled to B.C. for seasonal farming work will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms by federal officials (Canadian Border Service Agency and Public Health Agency of Canada). If they have symptoms upon arrival, depending on the severity of their condition, they may be placed in quarantine at the point of entry or be sent to the hospital as per the federal Quarantine Act. If asymptomatic, workers will be sent to a government-managed accommodation to self-isolate for 14 days.

Employers with questions should contact AgriServiceBC at 1 888 221-7141 or by email: AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca

Quick Facts:

- Every year, approximately 10,000 seasonal farm workers are employed in B.C. through the federal Seasonal Agriculture Worker Program (SAWP).
- Approximately 1,000 TFWs will arrive in British Columbia from Mexico in April to perform seasonal farm work through the SAWP. An additional 2,000 to 3,000 TFWs are expected to arrive in B.C. after April.
- On April 13, the federal government announced \$50 million to help temporary foreign workers arriving to work in the farming, fishing and food production and processing industries put in place self-isolation measures. It allows TFWs an exemption to travel restrictions to Canada provided they can adhere to the 14-day self-isolation period upon arrival. This will support worker salaries while they are self-isolating for 14 days or housing upgrades to meet requirements.
- Employees who have concerns about their rights can call workplace health and safety offices or employment standards offices.
 - Call WorkSafeBC about unsafe or dangerous work or workplace safety at 1 888 621-7233.
 - Call the Employment Standards Branch about problems with pay or hours of work at 1 800 663-3316.

Learn More:

Information sheet for arriving employees: http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/TFW_Farm_Workers.pdf

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/>

Or follow @CDCofBC on Twitter.

For the provincial health officer's orders, notices and guidance, visit:

www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance

For non-health related information, including financial, child care and education supports, travel, transportation and essential service information, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/covid19

Or call 1 888 COVID19 (1 888 268-4319) between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m., seven days a week.

For recommendations on protecting yourself and your community, including for employers and businesses, visit:

[http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))

For common questions about COVID-19 and terminology, visit:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions>

Contacts:

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