 **Beaverhead County Public Health**

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Mandate for Beaverhead County H2A Employers and Workers

As of this writing, there are 171 positive cases, 10 hospitalizations, and 4 deaths due to COVID-19 in Montana. These are now occurring from community spread which means people contracted the disease from unknown COVID-19 cases in the community. Positive cases continue to grow in counties around Beaverhead County. It is our responsibility to try to prevent or at least slow COVID-19 by limiting people from suspect areas into our county.

Public Health has been receiving some calls regarding the return of H2A workers, mostly from Mexico but possibly from other Latin American countries. This population is essential for our agricultural day-to-day work. We would like to provide the following guidelines for both employers and workers:

* All employees who are arriving from outside of the United States must self-isolate for 14 days upon arrival in Beaverhead County per Governor mandate. Please notify Public Health of arrivals from out of country.
* Employees must not travel together in a vehicle. Alternatives to this might be to take separate vehicles or using separate ATVs.
* Employees should be allowed to work outside, but must maintain 6-foot distance from each other even while outside, including during lunch breaks.
* Shared equipment should be sanitized when changing operators—including all surfaces commonly touched while operative the equipment.
* Good handwashing should be encouraged as often as possible. Encourage use after using the restroom, before eating, and before preparing food. If soap and water are unavailable, please provide hand sanitizer.
* Housing must accommodate 6-foot separation.
* Employees must not travel into town for supplies until they have been in Beaverhead County for 14 days. Supplies will need to be provided by the employer until the 14-day period is completed.
* Employers should track their employees and are responsible for ensuring these guidelines are followed.

Most importantly, if anyone is sick, please keep them home. They may have a common viral illness which may be similar to COVID-19. Please keep them home until they have felt completely normal for 72 hours. If the symptoms are severe, or medical care is needed, please **CALL** your local health care provider. The symptoms will be discussed and it will be determined if testing for COVID-19 is necessary, and how that testing will occur.

**Things you can do to help:**

\*After your workers are done with their 14-day quarantine, continue to practice “social distancing”. This means staying away from large groups or gatherings of people. If you are in charge of events, consider delaying the event for several weeks or consider an online forum. No social event is worth endangering you or others’ health. When in a public place try to stay 6 feet away from other people. 6 feet is the approximate distance that droplets from a sneeze or cough can travel through the air. If we are careful about practicing social distancing, we can slow the spread of the virus. This virus can only survive if it keeps jumping from person to person.

\*Stay informed! Be careful to use reliable sources for your news!

\*Sanitize frequently touched hard surfaces within your workplace. Pay attention to things that are touched regularly and clean these often.

\*Consider seeking medical care only in a true emergency. Many things can be seen in the outpatient setting. We need to try to keep space available within our hospital.

\*Ensure your workplace has some cross-training of employees, in case some are out sick for extended periods of time.

The COVID-19 Pandemic is currently the biggest threat to our country and our world. We implore all our citizens to please follow these actions to keep our community as safe as possible.

More information can be found at <https://beaverheadcounty.org/departments/public-health/>. On our website you will have access to this document in Spanish and English and to other helpful documents.

### REVERSE 9-1-1 Emergency Alerts

Be informed of emergencies in your community.  You can text your **ZIPCODE** to **888777** to receive these alerts.

Respectfully,

Sue Hansen RN Megan Evans MD

Director Health Officer