



COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Interactions between Industry Representatives and the Customer Base in the Field - June 2020 -

This CAHI guideline is not a legal document. Employers seeking legal advice for any questions related to occupational health and safety, human resources or any other matter in relation to COVID-19 or other topics should consult legal counsel.

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

1.1 Purpose of industry guidance

The Canadian Animal Health Institute (CAHI) has developed this guidance document to support CAHI member companies with respect to specific operational questions during the COVID-19 pandemic, for use on a voluntary basis. It contains recommendations with respect to managing interactions between animal health industry representatives and their customer base which would normally be taking place during field calls to veterinary practices, farm premises, and other locations outside of animal health company offices.

The recommendations compiled in this document are based on guidance issued to date by Canadian federal, provincial and territorial governments, which can be found in the accompanying *CAHI Guide to COVID-19 Federal and Provincial Workplace Guidance Materials Available for Canadian Provinces as of June 2020*

Some provinces require employers to have a COVID-19 operational plan in place to outline how daily operations during the pandemic will meet public health requirements (e.g., physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, hand and respiratory hygiene, pre-screening for symptoms, etc.) and ensure that reopening and a return to some level of operations is managed safely. While not mandatory in all provinces, CAHI recommends that member companies that have not already developed a COVID-19 operational plan consider doing so.

1.2 The federal, provincial, and local government context

Employers have obligations to protect workers from hazards in the workplace as set out in provincial/territorial occupational health and safety legislation and regulations, and must also operate in compliance with emergency and public health orders.

Over the past three months, all Canadian provinces and territories have implemented restrictive COVID-19 public health measures, based on varying contexts and needs. As these measures begin to ease, phases of operational reopening will therefore be limited by the most restrictive provincial/territorial and local government requirements in place within a given jurisdiction.

CAHI member companies should be fully aware of, and compliant with, all regional, jurisdictional, and local requirements affecting their operations and customer base in a given jurisdiction. All municipal and local public health warnings, directions and recommendations related to COVID-19 should be followed.

In cases of conflicting orders, directions, or recommendations issued by different levels of government, the most restrictive guideline in place within the jurisdiction where an industry representative is operating should be followed.

CAHI recommends that member companies consider establishing a regular schedule for monitoring provincial and local public health updates, so operational practices can be promptly revised or adapted regionally, as needed.

In addition, CAHI recommends that all interactions with the Canadian customer base should ultimately be driven by, and aligned with, the comfort level and needs of individual customers, as some customers may be more reluctant than others to re-introduce visits from industry representatives.

In cases where a customer's requirements for interaction with industry representatives are more restrictive than those already set by the company, the more restrictive measures should be followed.

1.3 Management of COVID-19 cases and contacts

Industry representatives should routinely self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, and companies should consider screening representatives regularly (e.g. having field staff complete self-screening checklists prior to interacting with any customers). For further guidance on screening procedures, employers should consult provincial and/or local authorities. A sample Self-Assessment Flow Chart released by AgSafeBC is provided in Appendix 1.

In accordance with Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommendations, industry representatives exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should be required to stay at home until criteria to discontinue isolation have been met, based on consultations with the local public health authority.

Illness reporting requirements should be well communicated to all field staff, and training on these requirements should be considered.

Cases of COVID-19 are managed by local public health authorities, including the ordering of isolation periods for workers and contact tracing and follow-up. Due to the period of COVID-19 transmissibility during an incubation period, industry representatives in direct contact with customers should keep detailed logs of all such interactions, including information on dates/times, circumstances and nature of interactions to support any required public health follow-up of infected and/or exposed individuals.

1.4 Mental health supports

Industry representatives may be experiencing a high degree of uncertainty, worry, anxiety and stress about health and safety, and how COVID-19 may disrupt their work and personal lives.

Employers should acknowledge these additional COVID-19 challenges and implement strategies to address them (e.g. sending out staff communications identifying online and/or community mental health resources), and an explanation of how to access any available mental health and other resources in their benefits plans and employee assistance programs, along with information on how much coverage is available.

1.5 Update/Revision of industry guidance

Over time, the recommendations in this guidance document may be adapted or expanded as COVID-19 response measures across Canada continue to be eased or reintroduced, based upon guidance from federal and provincial/territorial governments, as well as public health authorities.

This CAHI guidance document will be reviewed no less frequently than on a quarterly basis from June 2020 until March 2021 to determine whether the recommendations below require any updates or revisions, based on changes to government guidance. Reviews will be conducted by a time limited CAHI Task Group convened specifically for each review, and will result in a new version of the document.

2. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Physical distancing is one of the most effective ways to reduce viral spread during the pandemic. The overall goal of physical distancing is to reduce virus transmission which results from human-to-human contact.

2.1 Alternative Service Delivery

Particularly in the initial stages of reopening, and in areas identified as COVID-19 hotspots with public health evidence of ongoing community spread of the virus, industry representatives should continue to capitalize on existing modalities to support customers remotely for non-essential interactions as much as possible.

It should, however, be recognized that not all customers may have access to alternative service delivery means (e.g. rural or remote areas with limited internet service or access), and provision of certain essential services (e.g. addressing a lack of product efficacy or adverse reactions, particularly in livestock operations) may require on-site visits.

Current government guidance for agricultural settings advises farmers and producers to limit on-site interactions with outside service providers, and avoid any unnecessary visits to the workplace by supply chain partners, vendors or others who do not provide an immediate, essential service to the farm.

2.2 Physical Distancing Requirements

If/when customers require or request in-person interactions, such as site or clinic visits, industry representatives should ensure compliance with physical distancing requirements by:

- maintaining a physical distance of at least two (2) metres during all interactions
- avoiding common greetings that involve any direct contact, such as handshakes
- following any and all provincial, territorial, and local government requirements with respect to restrictions on the number of individuals permitted within a confined space (e.g. occupancy limits, or space requirements for room occupancy)

As COVID-19 control measures undergo further easing in later stages of the reopening process, and assuming that customers indicate an increased comfort level with in-person interactions with industry representatives, more such interactions may be appropriate.

3. RESPIRATORY HYGIENE, PPE AND HAND HYGIENE

3.1 Respiratory Hygiene

When physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained during in-person interactions, the PHAC recommends wearing a non-medical mask or face covering. Some local jurisdictions may also have mandatory mask orders in place. When worn properly, a non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the spread of infectious respiratory droplets from an unknowingly infected

person to others and to surfaces in their vicinity. Industry representatives should receive training on the proper donning, doffing and use/wearing of non-medical masks.

Non-medical masks or cloth face coverings must fit well and be worn safely. Non-medical face masks or face coverings should:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain their shape after washing and drying
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- be made of at least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Individuals who are unable to wear a mask because doing so would be contrary to their health or safety due to a medical condition can be provided with a face shield as an alternative. Face shields are less desirable than masks with respect to providing protection from the wearer as a population prevention measure, so their use should be strictly limited to those who are unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition.

3.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Non-medical masks are not considered personal protective equipment (PPE) as they do not protect the wearer of the mask. Although all efforts should be made to preserve the supply of medical masks and respirators for healthcare settings, there may be some workplace/business settings for which respiratory PPE (e.g., N95 masks) may be a more appropriate choice for both respiratory hygiene and the protection of the worker (e.g. if entering premises where protection from airborne dust and microorganisms, such as some agricultural settings, is required). If worn, respirators such as N95 masks must be fit-tested to the wearer in order to be considered effective in protecting the worker from aerosols and infectious droplets.

Gloves are not routinely recommended, but their use can help limit contact with contaminated surfaces, products, etc., and some customers may require industry representatives to wear gloves when visiting their premises. Employees should follow established practices for the suitable changing and disposal of gloves, and should be mindful not touch their face with gloved hands. If employers provide gloves for employees' use, they should also ensure that employees receive proper training on how to put on and take off gloves to prevent contamination. Glove removal should be immediately followed by hand hygiene.

PPE is only effective if workers fully understand what the PPE was designed to do, wear it correctly, and understand its limitations. Workers should be trained in the fit, use, storage, cleaning, maintenance and limitations of the PPE that they wear and should be aware that not using consistent and appropriate PPE techniques may increase the level of risk.

3.3 Hand Hygiene

When coupled with physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene using warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds provides the best means of preventing the spread of COVID-19. If handwashing is not feasible, use of a hand sanitizer or hand sanitizing wipes containing at least 60% alcohol is an acceptable alternative. Industry representatives should wash/sanitize their hands before and after entering any customer premises, as well as after contact with others, or with surfaces that others have touched. Employers should ensure all employees receive proper training on appropriate hand washing and/or hand sanitizing techniques. If using hand sanitizing wipes, workers should also have a safe place for proper disposal of these. Waste containers for used sanitizing wipes should be emptied and cleaned on a regular basis.

Employers should provide industry representatives interacting with customers with the following hand and respiratory hygiene supplies and PPE:

- ***hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol; and***
- ***non-medical masks or face coverings (alternatively, employers may provide medical masks and/or fit-tested N95 respirators, where appropriate)***

4. RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR FIELD CALLS

4.1 Communications with customers

Companies should communicate details on how they plan to operate with respect to in-person interactions with customers during the pandemic, so customers know what to expect.

As customers become comfortable with re-integration of in-person visits by industry representatives into their operations, visits should occur by appointment only, with no walk-ins or drop-ins. Scheduling, feasibility and appropriateness of arranging field calls should take into account the flow of individuals within the customers' premises to minimize interactions and contact.

When scheduling a field call, representatives should work with the customer to determine a location that is suitable to maintaining a two (2) metre distance between individuals, and ensure that all customer requirements are fully understood with respect to entering the

premises, as well any pre-screening the customer may ask the representative to complete. Industry representatives should also confirm that any individuals they will be meeting with will also self-screen ahead of any meeting. A sample Field Call Planning Checklist is provided in Appendix 2.

4.2 Screening

In all cases, prior to leaving their home to go on a field call, industry representatives should be encouraged to use a self-screening tool (as referenced in Section 1.3 above) to ensure that interacting with a customer is appropriate on a given day.

4.3 Levels of Field Call Activity

In the initial stages of reopening, and in areas identified as COVID-19 hotspots with public health evidence of ongoing community spread of the virus, it is recommended that industry representatives consider limiting the number of field calls they make in a day to reduce the risk of inadvertently spreading COVID-19 across multiple premises. As COVID-19 control measures undergo further easing in later stages of the reopening process, public health authorities advise of decreases in levels of community spread of the virus, and customers' comfort level with interactions with industry representatives increases, the number of field calls made in a day can be gradually increased.

In the initial stages of reopening, and in areas identified as COVID-19 hotspots with public health evidence of ongoing community spread of the virus, it is recommended that industry representatives limit the number of staff they interact with directly at customer premises during field calls.

4.4 Hand hygiene

Thorough hand hygiene should be performed immediately before and after each field call, and respiratory hygiene and PPE supplies should be appropriately managed and/or disposed of between calls.

Touching surfaces, including counters, door frames, computer screens, etc. on customer premises, should be avoided, unless absolutely necessary.

4.5 Detailed Logging of Field Call Activity

As discussed in Section 1.3 above, industry representatives should keep a detailed log of all

field call activities, including dates/times, premises entered, and individuals interacted with in case contact tracing needs to be conducted by public health.

4.6 Management of Materials

Drop off of various materials (e.g. literature, samples, dosing guns, hatchery equipment, etc.) to customers was often a part of field calls by industry representatives pre-COVID-19. Under the current COVID-19 circumstances, it is strongly recommended to send materials by virtual means if possible.

Shipping of materials by post or courier as alternatives to in-person drop off of materials by industry representatives should be considered whenever possible.

When drop off of materials is unavoidable, measures should be implemented to minimize contact between field staff and customers during drop off and pick up of any materials, samples, etc. that may be required (e.g. contactless deliveries). Industry representatives should schedule drop offs and call first before dropping off or picking up any materials, and ensure that customer requirements for drop off or pick up are fully understood.

The use of shared materials, equipment and/or tools used during calls (for example, pens, computers, etc.) should be discouraged, and industry representatives should have their own equipment with them for use during a field call.

4.7 Restaurant Visits

In the initial stages of reopening, and in areas identified as COVID-19 hotspots with public health evidence of ongoing community spread of the virus, local or provincial government restrictions with respect to dining and restaurant use must be followed, and restaurant visits are not recommended. Customer meetings at outdoor dining venues (patios, etc.) may be reasonably considered, as long as physical distancing requirements can be met.

5. TRAVEL

There is a wide variation in the geographic size of territories serviced by industry representatives in Canada, depending on a number of factors including species, density of customer base, and company organization. As a result, representatives operating out of different regions of Canada, and serving different species or commodity groups may have different travel requirements under normal circumstances.

Travel during the pandemic remains a relatively higher risk activity, and public health requirements following international (and in some cases interprovincial) travel may impose self-isolation periods on individuals. In addition, disease risk due to COVID-19 transmission varies widely between provinces/territories, and even within provinces. Industry representatives should be aware of regional differences in disease risk within the territory they service, and take these into account in planning field calls. Travel into or out of relative hot spots of viral activity should be avoided.

5.1 International travel

At the time of the writing of this document, Canadian borders are closed to non-essential travel. Returning from international travel also triggers public health requirements for a 14-day quarantine or isolation period. As a result, international travel for work purposes should be avoided unless absolutely necessary, at least until international travel restrictions are fully lifted by the federal government.

5.2 Inter-provincial travel

A number of provinces are also still restricting entry to their own residents and/or essential workers only. Long distance travel by individuals increases the risk of inadvertent spread of the virus between geographic areas. As a result, at this time, interprovincial travel by industry representatives should also be discouraged, unless they are operating out of cities or towns on an inter-provincial border, or such travel is required for necessary services, and only if permitted under provincial or local government restrictions in place.

Overnight stays are not recommended, unless absolutely necessary.

As COVID-19 control measures undergo further easing in later stages of the pandemic, relaxing restrictions on long distance domestic travel may be considered, and domestic travel between different provinces may be re-integrated into operations according to different timelines across the country, depending on the epidemiological context.

5.3 Local travel and use of public transportation

Use of public transportation (planes, trains, subway systems, buses etc.) should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Local travel to provide service by industry representatives should occur by use of individual personal vehicles. As physical distancing within vehicles is very challenging, ride-alongs, coaching days and other scenarios involving co-travel with industry colleagues should be avoided.

6. MEETINGS/GATHERINGS

In the initial stages of reopening, provision of continuing education programs and other meetings or gatherings involving multiple individuals should be delivered remotely whenever possible.

6.1 Meeting sizes

Any in-person meetings and/or organized gatherings (e.g. training or continuing education sessions for customers) that do occur should comply with provincial/territorial and local government restrictions on the size of gatherings permitted, and should occur only if customers are fully comfortable with these events. Provinces in more advanced stages of reopening may allow larger sizes of gatherings, and may have different requirements for gatherings held in indoor vs. outdoor venues.

6.2 Meeting location and set up

In addition to gathering size restrictions, in-person meetings should only occur in locations where requirements for physical distancing between individual participants can be adequately met. Some provinces have implemented specific space (e.g. square footage required per person) or indoor venue occupancy limit requirements, which must be followed. Outdoor venues for meetings should be considered where feasible and practical, as they may reduce the level of risk of COVID-19 transmission by allowing for more effective physical distancing practices.

7. BIOSECURITY

Particular care should be taken to ensure that COVID-19 operational plans and activities are well integrated with larger biosecurity protocols already in place to prevent and manage other pathogens, particularly when dealing with livestock and poultry on agribusiness premises.

Industry representatives should ensure that their use of hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and PPE bolsters biosecurity on customer premises, and does not inadvertently violate it (e.g. through inappropriate disposal of sanitizing hand wipes, disposable masks or gloves).

Consideration should also be given to the appropriate management of clothing and shoes which may have been potentially contaminated over the course of the field call.

APPENDIX 1: Sample Self-Assessment Flow Chart



APPENDIX 2: Sample Field Call Planning Checklist

Date of Collection of Information: _____

Date of Scheduled Field Call: _____

Questions	Notes on Customer's Answers
Where will this field call be taking place? <input type="checkbox"/>	
How many of the customer's staff will be participating, and does the proposed venue/location meet physical distancing requirements? <input type="checkbox"/>	
What pre-screening requirements does the customer have for visitors to their premises? <input type="checkbox"/>	
Will customer and any of the customer's staff participating in the field call be self-screening prior to the visit? <input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the customer have any instructions with respect to how their premises are to be entered/exited for this field call? <input type="checkbox"/>	
What are the customer's respiratory hygiene and/or other PPE requirements for this field call? <input type="checkbox"/>	
If materials are to be dropped off as part of this field call, how would the customer like to receive these materials? <input type="checkbox"/>	
If this is a subsequent field call, have any of the customer's requirements changed since the last call? <input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any other requirements the customer has for this field call? <input type="checkbox"/>	