

The safety of our employees, volunteers, attendees, and community is our utmost priority. We encourage you to always consider the health and safety of those populations that may be more at risk due to age or health status. In addition, we ask that you continue to use non pharmaceutical interventions (face masks, proper hygiene, etc.) that keep you and others safe. The guidance in this document covers December 9-23, 2020. If factors change significantly the guidance will be updated.

Please also remember to access and reference our agency COVID 19 resources at <https://texashelp.tamu.edu/>. The password for the Extension Employee resources is 77843. This is the location for screening forms, preparedness checklists and other valuable resources.

External Agency Face to Face Meetings (public events)

NOTE: *Face coverings are required at all events.* Outdoors, masks are required when a six-foot social distancing radius cannot be maintained. *All facilities of The Texas A&M University System require the use of facial coverings.* Employees are asked to clearly communicate the requirement for face coverings but are not asked to physically enforce the requirement.

Factors for Decision Making	Description
Greater than 8% positivity rate	Percent test positivity in the last 7 days and comparison to the previous 7 days
Hot Spot	*Emerging Hotspot – communities with a high likelihood to become hotspots in the next 1-7 days *Hotspot – communities that have reached a threshold of disease activity considered as being of high burden *Sustained Hotspot – communities that have had a high sustained case burden and may be higher risk for experiencing healthcare resource limitations
Rapid Riser	Rapid Riser counties meet the following criteria: - >100 new cases in last 7 days - >0% change in 7-day incidence - >-60% change in 3-day incidence - 7-day incidence / 30-day incidence ratio >0.31 - one or both of the following triggering criteria: (a) >60% change in 3-day incidence, (b) >60% change in 7-day incidence

Red Level: Counties with two of three factors pertaining to positivity rate of greater than 8% or more, OR a rapid rise in cases OR a hot spot

- No face to face Extension-hosted or Extension-sponsored events.
- No guest speaking or presenting at other entities’ events.
- No overnight events.

- Mission critical events may be considered on a case by case basis. Requests should be made through direct supervisor.
- Essential training related to continuing education and emergency response may be approved by the executive associate director on a case by case basis.

Yellow Level: Counties with a positivity rate of greater than 8% or more, OR a rapid rise in cases OR a hotspot

- Group meetings **with a limit of 10 people** at 75% capacity of space or less are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced.
- No overnight events.
- AgriLife Extension requires a screening form for each participant at day youth events.
- Seek alternative methods to deliver face to face meetings and educational programs.
- Mission critical events may be considered on a case by case basis. Requests should be made through direct supervisor.
- Essential training related to continuing education and emergency response may be approved by the executive associate director on a case by case basis.

Green Level:

- Group meetings **with a limit of 50 people** at 75% capacity or less are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced. If greater than 50 attendees, a preparedness plan must be submitted and approved by the supervisor. (Employees in large offices do not count against this max if they are not part of the meeting and remain socially distanced.)
- All overnight events require a submission of a preparedness plan that is approved by the supervisor.
- AgriLife Extension requires a screening form for each participant at day youth events and all overnight events and programs.
- Daily temperature checks are required at all overnight events.
- For individuals seeking alternative methods of delivery for traditional face-to-face meetings and educational programs, the Digital Education unit has put together a [resource on best practices and tools](#) that are currently supported by AgriLife.

Medical/Disability Exemptions

Some AgriLife Extension program participants may not be able to wear a face covering due to a pre-existing medical condition or other disability (e.g., asthma, respiratory disease, inability to remove a face covering without assistance). Requests for accommodations should be made to the Extension Office or Unit hosting the event. The contact for requests should be the most direct program contact such as the event or activity organizer or class instructor.

- A medical certification is requested for exemptions. That documentation should be shared from the event organizer with the District Extension Administrator in the district the event is being held, regardless if it is an agent or specialist hosted event. Documentation should only be kept in Laserfiche.
- Personal information is confidential and should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without permission or authorization from the individual and/or parent/guardian listed on this form unless the individual is involved in the care and supervision of the minor. Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared. Employees and volunteers should ensure that such information must be kept confidential and stored appropriately.
- Advance notice of the need for accommodations/exemptions can help to ensure that there is adequate time to review the request and decide on a case-by-case basis. If possible, a face shield should be worn instead of a face covering. If this is not possible, the CDC always recommends limiting exposure to others and maintaining a 6 feet physical distance in the absence of a face covering. Participants may also be given a specific time for arrival or departure from an event. Participants may also consider using available distance education options.

Office Staffing Guidance

The maximum percentage of employees in any given physical OFFICE location is 75% until further notice. These percentages are not a target that must be achieved, but rather maximums that may be necessary for unit or department operations to function through the fall. If you or a family member have health concerns or are in a category of greater risk, please work with your immediate supervisor.

- County offices follow continuity of operations plan from the county but may also incorporate the health and safety guidance from AgriLife Extension as appropriate.
- TAMU Campus Buildings and Transportation: Face masks are required in laboratories, indoor spaces and on public transportation, even if no one else is present based on [new guidance from the University](#). Outdoors, masks are required when a six-foot social distancing radius cannot be maintained. Masks are required in public spaces but not in private offices. All employees at these sites must follow the TAMU guidelines, effective June 15. You may request an exception due to disability by contacting Jennifer Hobbs.
- District Centers and others outside Brazos County owned by the agency: Face masks are required in indoor spaces. Outdoors, masks are required when a six-foot social distancing radius cannot be maintained. Masks are required in public spaces but not in private offices. All employees at these sites must follow the TAMU guidelines, effective June 15. You may request an exception due to disability by contacting Jennifer Hobbs.

Internal Agency Face to Face Meetings (employees)

We encourage all meetings of employees to occur virtually. If necessity dictates an in-person format, the number of attendees must always be no more than 10 with proper social distancing and face covering mandates observed. If a meeting can be held with 10 people or less, we do encourage you to include a virtual option to ensure information is available to all audiences, including those who may choose not to attend based on personal health concerns. Any employee group gathering of more than 10 must have the approval of the CEO.

Travel Guidance

- Continue current travel policy limitations for in state, with approval granted by supervisor. Out-of-state travel must be deemed mission critical and approved by the CEO or designee in Concur. Employees traveling outside of Texas should review the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) prior to travel. No international travel is endorsed at this time.
- No travel to or from a Red Level County unless mission critical.
- If traveling with more than one person, the vehicle is limited to no more than 50% of maximum vehicle occupancy. All those in the vehicle must wear their face coverings. The ventilation system must be turned on but not placed into recirculation mode at any time. If travel is in conjunction with an overnight trip, temperature checks will be implemented at the beginning of each day.
- CEA/EA under the supervision of DEA's – in county travel of headquarter(s) is allowed without prior approval. For out of county travel submit the travel request form AG-802 with approval by immediate supervisor. <https://agrillifeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-802.pdf/>.
- Specialist and those they supervise in research site activities – Please submit travel requests (weekly if possible) through concur. Specific locations and duties should be noted by day in the notes section.
- No blanket travel will be issued.
- Within the state of Texas, all traveling employees should review the current [community transmission of COVID-19](#) in the locations they will be traveling through or to.