

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
**COVID 19 Guidance for TMN Program**

The guidance in this document covers December 18, 2020 -January 6, 2021. If factors change significantly the guidance will be updated.

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.

**External Agency Face to Face Group Event Considerations**

When evaluating whether an Extension-hosted or Extension-sponsored event should take place, some factors to consider are:

- Ability to conduct event virtually
- Status of county where event is scheduled to take place
- Timing of event (day, overnight, possibility of a staggered schedule, etc.)
- Anticipated number of participants
- Facilities to be utilized (indoor/outdoor, maximum capacity, etc.)

It is important to recognize that some events are more time-sensitive than others. Some events can be postponed to a later date without harming the progress of the project or program. Events with priority are those with time, fiscal and workforce implications. Identifying one program/event to be mission critical does not place greater value on it in comparison to others.

***NOTE: Face coverings are required at all events.*** Outdoors, masks are required when a six-foot social distancing radius cannot be maintained.

| 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<br>*Hotspot – communities that have reached a threshold of disease activity considered as being of high burden<br>*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**

- Group INDOOR events **at 25% capacity** of space or less are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced. Events must be approved by chapter advisor through a preparedness plan.
- Group OUTDOOR events may be held **with a maximum of 30 people**.
- Face to face group events should be mission critical. Events with priority are ones with time, fiscal and workforce implications.
- Face to face guest speaking or presenting at other entities' events **must be approved by chapter advisor 14 days in advance**.
- No overnight events.

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

- Group INDOOR events **at 50% capacity** of space or less are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced. Events must be approved by chapter advisor through a preparedness plan.
- Group OUTDOOR events may be held **with a maximum of 50 people**.
- Face to Face group events should be mission critical. Events with priority are ones with time, fiscal and workforce implications.
- No overnight events.

**Green Level:**

- Group INDOOR events **at 75% capacity** or less are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced.
- Group OUTDOOR events are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced.
- All overnight events require a submission of a preparedness plan that is approved by the chapter advisor.
- Daily temperature checks are required at all overnight events.

**Medical/Disability Exemptions**

Some AgriLife Extension/Texas Master Naturalist 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.

**Event Safety Practices**

- All overnight events must submit a preparedness plan and be approved by the chapter advisor.
- Face coverings are required at all events regardless of County location.
- Pre-order supplies and materials, including tissues and hand sanitizer for all participants. Have face coverings available.
- Hosts and participants should wear face coverings, with participants expected to provide their PPE.
- Tables and chairs should be sanitized before and after meeting and at breaks.
- Frequently clean high-touch areas, including door handles, surfaces, handrails, etc. within the confinement of the physical space of the program.

- Actively monitor where COVID-19 is circulating. Advise participants in advance that if they have any symptoms or feel unwell, they should not attend.
- Send anyone who appears sick away, whether employee, volunteer, or event participant.

### **Screening of Participants**

- The Governor's guidance for Day and Overnight Summer events and Equestrian events calls for screening of participants, employees, volunteers and contractors.
- The AgriLife Extension screening form can be used for that purpose in addition to any other situation or event you are asked to screen individuals.
- Event coordinators should retain hard copies of this document.

### **Volunteers**

- Adhere to guidelines that apply to employees, offices and events
- Local offices should consider setting a schedule with rotations if a large number of volunteers are frequently present.

### **Office Staffing Guidance**

The maximum percentage of employees or volunteers 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 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 chapter advisor.

- County offices follow continuity of operations plan from the county but may also incorporate the health and safety guidance from AgriLife Extension as appropriate.

## **Office Practices**

- Employees and volunteers are recommended to wear face coverings or required to at TAMU Campus, District Extension Centers and other outside Brazos County owned by the agency, and practice social distancing whenever interacting with the public and if circumstances put you within 6 feet of other Extension staff members or volunteers.
- Prohibit handshaking and other unnecessary contact. Carefully sanitize any common area used.
- Frequently clean high-touch areas, including door handles, surfaces, handrails, etc.
- Limit sharing of office supplies and equipment. If sharing is essential, all items should be disinfected before and after use.
- Limit the number of people in a space such that social distancing can be maintained.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- When exchanging paper and coin money:
  - Do not touch your face afterward.
  - Ask clients to place cash on the counter rather than directly in your hand.
  - Place money directly on the counter when providing change or receipts back to the client.
  - Wipe counter with disinfectant or sanitizing wipes between each client's transaction.

## **Internal Agency Face to Face Meetings (AgriLife employees)**

We encourage all meetings of employees or volunteers 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 (AgriLife employees)**

- 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.
- 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.
- ***For Volunteer Travel, see TMN CLARIFICATION OF GUIDELINES document***