

September 22, 2020

All Extension Employees,

We hope this email finds you well. This is a very fluid time as we see increasing positive cases in some parts of the state, yet in other parts of the state positive cases are decreasing or nonexistent. We very much value the AgriLife Extension statewide network of agents and specialists across 254 counties. It is that very network that has helped our agency respond to the COVID-19 crisis. We know that no one specific guidance can address all the challenges each of you are facing. It is our hope the following parameters will be helpful while taking into account the local health data. New information since the last agency correspondence on August 7th is **highlighted in yellow.**

Office Staffing Guidance

The maximum percentage of employees in any given physical OFFICE location is 75% until further notice. These percentages are not targets 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.
- 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 be no more than 10 with proper social distancing and face covering mandates observed at all times. 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.**

External Agency Face to Face Meetings (public events)

- Group meetings of **75% capacity** of space or fewer people are allowed only if social distancing can be practiced with a limited capacity of 50 people. If greater than 50, a preparedness plan must be submitted and approved by supervisor. (Employees in large offices do not count against this max if not part of the meeting in an office and socially distanced.)
- 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.
- All overnight events must submit a preparedness plan and be approved by the supervisor.
- Face coverings are required at all events, unless the county hosting the event is exempt per the Governor's Resolution GA-29 on July 2, 2020. All Texas A&M University System facilities require the use of facial covering regardless of County location.
- AgriLife Extension requires a screening form for each participant at all overnight coordinated events and programs and day youth events.

The safety of our employees, 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.

Travel Guidance

There have been no changes to the current travel guidance. Below are the highlights:

- 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.
- **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 and approved by immediate supervisor.
<https://agrilifeas.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.