

## Safety Risks for Farmers

Farmers and ranchers face unique safety risks as COVID-19 spreads, especially as the planting season shifts into high gear.

Physical distancing becomes difficult as farmers receive seed and chemical deliveries. Shipments of seed bags and chemical containers arrive on trucks that have been to other farms. This could spell trouble if precautions are not taken. The National Institutes of Health reports that the virus can survive up to three days on plastic and stainless steel surfaces and up to 24 hours on paper surfaces.



### What can I do to limit the risks to my farm?

- Limit traffic in and out of the farm. Ask to be there when delivery trucks arrive. Maintain a 6-foot distance from the delivery person.
- On many farms, delivery people use your own tractor or forklift to unload supplies. To reduce the risk of virus spread, be sure that no one other than yourself operates the equipment. This creates additional planning and work for you, but it reduces risk of transferring the virus as multiple people take turns at operating equipment.
- Keep sanitizing supplies in commonly used areas such as tractor cabs and sheds. Wipe down doorknobs, steering wheels, radio knobs, grab handles, fuel tank covers and other surfaces that people might touch.
- Change how you communicate during the crisis. Harness technology to help you communicate safely. Use the telephone, email and your tablet.

Text work plans to your employees instead of holding morning meetings in the shed or at your kitchen table.

Use your cell phone or tablet to take a picture of a broken part to send to the parts dealer. Call ahead to make sure the parts are in stock and ask the dealer to place the part outside the door.



Farms face special risks because up to three generations of one family may still actively work on the farm. Meal times and child care might include grandparents, who may be at higher risk to severity of COVID-19. Even within families, maintain safe practices such as distancing. Wipe down surfaces frequently and try to minimize contacts. Also, consider how to safely handle “field food” and other meals during planting season.



Develop a written contingency plan in case you, family members or workers become ill from the virus. Decide who can fill vital roles and share this plan with those involved. Safety should be a priority for all who enter and leave the farm. Set and follow protocols.

Maintain equipment, but also take care of your health. You are your farm and family’s most important asset.

**Sources:** Rusty Lee, MU Extension field specialist in agronomy; Linda Geist, MU Extension writer.

## How to Use Cloth Face Coverings



Face coverings can be an effective means of slowing the spread of the infectious agent for many respiratory diseases and may help slow the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a face covering does NOT provide complete protection and does not replace other ways of slowing virus spread such as: ■staying away from public places and group gatherings, ■practicing social distancing (6 feet), ■washing hands and using hand sanitizer often, ■avoiding touching eyes, nose and mouth.



### How should face coverings be handled?

- Masks and cloth face coverings should be handled assuming they are contaminated with the virus causing COVID-19.
- Face coverings should be removed without touching the inside. They should be immediately placed with dirty laundry, or stored in a plastic bag until they can be properly cleaned.
- Wash your hands after handling a used face covering or use hand sanitizer, if hand-washing is not an option. If possible, wash your face after removing a face covering.
- Cloth face coverings should be washed in hot water after each use. Follow CDC guidelines at [go.ncsu.edu/cdclaundry](http://go.ncsu.edu/cdclaundry).



### No-sew method for making a bandana cloth face covering

The CDC provides [these instructions, along with other options](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), on their website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

1.



Fold bandana in half.

2.



Fold top down. Fold bottom up.

3.



Place rubber bands or hair ties about 6 inches apart.

4.

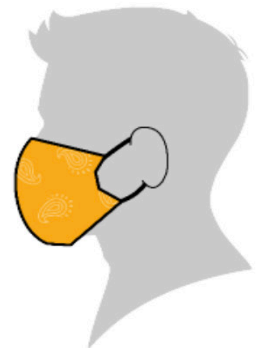


Fold side to the middle and tuck.

5.



6.



Sources: North Carolina State University Extension and U.S. Centers for Disease Control