



# BRITISH COLUMBI GRAPEGROWERS' ASSOCIATION

## *BCGA Covid-19 Update*

Dear Member,

You don't want to skip this update as it includes changes and clarifications to protocols that you don't want to miss.

These are unusual times and a lot of new responsibilities are being put on you as an employer; if you have any questions or need help navigating the new protocols, there is contact info below. Do not hesitate to use those resources. WALI has also hired a second person to help answer questions and direct you to the right source for information and assistance: [info@walicanada.ca](mailto:info@walicanada.ca).

If you only require workers during harvest, bookmark the domestic worker resources now so that you can find them when you need them.

And sign up for WALI's COVID-19 email updates as they also provide info relevant to domestic workers: [walicanada.ca](http://walicanada.ca).

### **UPDATE TO WORK CAMP REGULATIONS**

If you missed the announcement earlier last week, the Industrial Work Camps Regulation has been updated to reflect the Province's ease of restrictions. The update means that workers are no longer restricted to stay on farm during their time off (view the full order here). <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-industrial-camps.pdf>

WorkSafe BC's advice is that the employer continues to be responsible for the worker's safety when they leave the farm. The employer must have a plan to ensure that employees are safe during transport and at their destination away from the farm (ie proper PPE, safe transportation).

### **APPLICATION EXTENSION**

The application period for the Mandatory Isolation Support has been extended until **August 31, 2020** (the \$1,500 support for each TFW completing quarantine). The fund is limited and is first-come-first-serve so BCAC recommends completing your application as soon as possible. [More info](#).

A reminder that housing updates and flight costs do not qualify for reimbursement. Motel accommodation, transportation from Richmond to your vineyard, additional management time and costs (ie phone calls), food, and extras supplied to workers in quarantine self-isolation are valid. You will need to provide paperwork to prove the expenses

If you require further assistance, please contact Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada with any questions at **1-877-246-4682** or by email: [aafc.MISP-PAIO.aac@canada.ca](mailto:aafc.MISP-PAIO.aac@canada.ca).

### **TERM EXTENSIONS FOR SAWP WORKERS**

WALI has raised the issue with federal government and is waiting for a response re: extending the 8-month term limit for SAWP workers. Details will be shared with employers as they are made available.

### **LMIA's for 2021**

WALI has contacted Service Canada to confirm that they are receiving applications for workers to arrive in early 2021, as per the usual application process. Details will be shared with employers as they are made available.

**The following are communications from the Ministry of Agriculture:**

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS WHO PROVIDE ACCOMMODATION FOR THEIR FARM WORKERS**

By order of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), employers in the agriculture and seafood sector that provide accommodation for workers must:

- Develop a COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) protocol
- Appoint an Infection Prevention and Control Coordinator
- Schedule a site inspection <https://comfort.pathfinder.gov.bc.ca/app/agriseafoodopscreening/>

The IPC protocol should outline how the employer will prevent and control the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among workers in their place of accommodation, at the worksite and when travelling to and from the worksite.

- The protocol must be visibly posted in accommodations and worksite and must be available to be presented to an inspector upon request.

**AgSafe** has created templates and examples to assist farm operators in creating their protocols.

- [Templates and examples for completing a Risk Assessment and Infection Prevention and Control Protocols.](#)
- [Template and guidance for drafting a Self-isolation protocol.](#)

It is also recommended you complete a COVID-19 risk assessment by following the directions in the guidance document.

- [Guidance, Farms and Farm Workers - May 13, 2020 \(PDF, 454KB\)](#)

### **COVID-19 Awareness Course for Fruit Pickers in BC**

Reminder: To work as a fruit picker, or to stay in a designated campsite in BC, workers must complete either the **in-person** or [online version](#) of this presentation and **keep proof to show their employers**. This course is available in English and French. Contact [AgSafe](#) for in-person course options.

[The attached document, COVID-19 Self-isolation for Farm Workers: Information for Agriculture Industry in the Okanagan](#), provides information for industry associations and other organizations to help assist farm operators in developing self-isolation protocols. **Farm operators who have identified an inability to provide self-isolation for employees** who have been required to self-isolate by the Interior Health Authority or the Provincial Health Office may be provided the information in the attached document.

## **ACCOMMODATION INSPECTIONS**

Inspections are designed to support farmers in building the most robust plans and protocols for safeguarding their farm workers and protecting their farm operations from the negative impacts of outbreaks. Inspectors provide valuable assistance and information to support requirements.

Clarification - All farms on the issue of whether farms that received workers prior to the [Public Health](#) order require inspection:

- All BC farm operators must ensure a safe workplace and demonstrate proof of an infection control protocol.
- All farms including those that employ temporary foreign workers, must follow the Ministry of Agriculture's series of requirements to protect B.C. farmers and farmworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Regardless of when workers have arrived, there is still a requirement to develop the risk mitigation plan and implement all the COVID protocols.
- Farm employers should self identify through submission of the health form if they received workers prior to the program start in April and reach out to the team to schedule an inspection.

Farm employers are advised to fill out the [Health Form](#) and use the resources found on the webpage at the following link.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/covid-19-response/temporary-foreign-farmworkers>

Once the [Health Form](#) is submitted, an inspection officer will be assigned to coordinate an inspection. For assistance: [Emily.Carmichael@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Emily.Carmichael@gov.bc.ca).

- Thank You & Stay Safe

