



Memorandum

4.2.2021

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Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; COVID-19; Quarantine guidelines for seasonal primary production workers

This guide is based on the decision by the Finnish Government on 4 February 2021 to permit the entry of foreign seasonal workers into Finland for the 2021 growing season.

The entry of seasonal workers into the country is subject to any official decisions, guidelines and recommendations in force at the time. In addition, the employer must draw up a separate health security plan that follows national guidelines, and present the plan to the worker or group of workers. Local health authorities must also be notified of the arrival of foreign workers. The employer must draw up a health security plan in co-operation with the local infectious disease authorities. The plan is mandatory for all employers bringing in foreign workers. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare recommends as a precaution that the municipality's chief physician or a person authorised by the latter should also review how the municipality handles the treatment of seasonal workers who contract the virus.

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare has issued guidelines on the screening and quarantine of cross-border traffic into Finland during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Institute's guidelines, citizens of other EU member states or third countries entering Finland to work in critical primary production tasks must remain in self-imposed quarantine for 14 days and be tested negative for COVID-19 immediately upon entering the country. The self-imposed quarantine can be shortened by taking a second negative test 72 hours after entering Finland. Before the results of the second test are ready, the traveller must avoid contact with outsiders (quarantine-like conditions). The methods by which the quarantine-like conditions and other health security measures will be enforced must be described in detail in the health security plan for workers entering Finland. Local authorities of the place of residence will handle matters related to the second COVID-19 test. The physician in charge of infectious diseases may order an asymptomatic person to quarantine if they have been exposed to COVID-19. In these cases, the physician in charge of infectious diseases decides the length of the quarantine and gives instructions on how to act during the quarantine. During the quarantine imposed by the authorities, any instructions given on how to transfer to the location of the quarantine or self-isolation must be followed.

The purpose of the self-imposed quarantine is to prevent the spread of the virus from a potentially asymptomatic carrier. In practice, quarantined persons must avoid all close contact with others. If the person has travelled to Finland by land accompanied by other persons who will also quarantine at the same location, they may stay in the same place of accommodation and, in the manner described in the health security plan, form a single quarantine unit or 'bubble'. As a rule, workers must be provided with private quarantine facilities, such as a private room or, at the minimum, a quarantine bubble that is as small as possible. Particular attention should be given to social distancing, hygiene and the use of face masks. Quarantine conditions and other health security measures must be described in the case-specific health security plan.

During self-imposed quarantine, workers may go out or work on a farm, tree nursery or forest, as long as close contact with others is avoided. The employer is responsible for providing food to employees and otherwise ensure appropriate living conditions during the quarantine.

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The employer is responsible for employees' workplace safety and health. This applies to workers in self-imposed quarantine as well as all other persons working on the farm or comparable work community. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare's guidelines on good hand and coughing hygiene and social distancing must be followed. Cleaning guidelines can be found on the website of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The guidelines must be explained to workers carefully. As workers are increasingly required to work independently, the risks associated with this should be taken into account. The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health has more guidelines on general workplace well-being and health.

Contact with persons outside the quarantine bubble should be avoided, including during transport and meals and when using restrooms, showers and other staff facilities. If new foreign workers arrive at the farm at a later date, the new group naturally forms a separate quarantine bubble and must avoid contact with other workers. Visiting shops during quarantine is not permitted. Groceries and other items must be delivered to the quarantine bubble safely.

All employers of foreign seasonal workers must have a supervisor or contact person whom persons in quarantine and public authorities can contact if necessary. For example, the results of COVID-19 tests are personal health information and may not be disclosed to outsiders such as the employer's contact person.

If, based on symptoms, a worker is suspected during or after the quarantine of having contracted COVID-19, the same procedures apply as with Finnish workers and the business owners themselves. Under the Communicable Diseases Act, foreign workers who contract COVID-19 are entitled to appropriate care in Finland.

For further information, see the links below:

<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases-and-vaccinations/what-s-new/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-updates/travel-and-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://www.ttl.fi/en/fioh-coronavirus-instructions/>

<https://thl.fi/en/web/infectious-diseases-and-vaccinations/diseases-and-disease-control>