

COVID-19 Guiding Principles: In-season Agronomic Interactions

The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious public health challenge and the agricultural inputs industry is adapting to this difficult situation as it evolves. It is recognized that both pesticide and seed company staff play key roles in providing products, technical services and agronomic support to farmers throughout the season.

The health and safety of people is our top priority. Operations throughout the value chain are adapting to protect the health of their employees and grower customers while maintaining the ability to continue production activities.

The Canadian Seed Trade Association and CropLife Canada and their members have the following recommendations regarding in-season agronomic interactions with grower customers.

- No person with an isolation order or symptoms should report to work under any circumstances.
- Employees who can work remotely do so by using technology to maintain business operations including logistics, product support and technology services.
- For critical operations that cannot be accomplished remotely, organizations are advised to implement safety protocols including physical distancing, restricting non-essential access to site(s) and disinfecting high-touch hard surfaces to ensure a safe work environment.

Agronomic, technical and retail support services are expected to operate uninterrupted with knowledgeable and dedicated staff continuing to answer requests and share timely information throughout the growing season through technology that includes interactions via video conferencing, email, digital pictures, social media and texting.

When in-season field agronomic, technical support and retail related services (i.e., crop scouting, performance inquiries, etc.) are deemed necessary, adhere to all government-issued guidelines and the following additional checklist of recommended precautions to avoid the spread of COVID-19:

- Identify and evaluate “high risk” geographies prior to making business critical in person field visits.
- Maintain social distancing (2 metres) at all times.
- Adhere to good hygiene including frequent hand washing and the optional use of non-medical or face covering.
- Minimize daily in-field visits per day, whenever possible to reduce risk.
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for the activity (i.e., as per product label).
- Do not share PPE with others.
- Do not ride in the same vehicle or machinery with anyone else.
- Disinfect equipment, tools and high-touch areas on vehicles pre and post in-field visit.
- Do not share work tools, pens, documentation folios, etc.
- Remove all materials brought to the field site and safely dispose of thereafter.
- Shipping documentation, field reports and associated documentation should be transmitted electronically ensuring that appropriate authorisations are adhered to.
- Confirm that information communicated through the use of technology is fully understood by both parties to avoid any miscommunications or misinterpretations.
- Log daily interactions and areas of travel.

More information on COVID-19 can be found on the Government of Canada website: <https://bit.ly/2x3WnDf>