1. PURPOSE

This document establishes required procedures for protection of employee, customer, and animal health while performing animal facility inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. These procedures are applicable to all AC employees who enter animal facilities, carriers and exhibitors (all field activities henceforth referred to as “inspections”). They are meant for temporary use while the COVID-19 situation is still critical; they are subject to change as conditions change. Notifications will be provided as changes occur. A supplemental guidance document is also available for employees wishing to take additional precautions.

APHIS considers the conduct of mission critical activities, including inspections, in all counties to be appropriate, provided that inspectors use PPE as required in this document, the AC Inspection Guide, and requirements of State/local jurisdictions.

2. MASKING REQUIREMENTS

- Several species/families of animals have tested positive and/or shown symptoms after exposure to COVID-19. Because of this increased risk, abide by any additional measures being implemented at a particular facility regarding inspection of these animals, especially if there are or have been animals exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 infection. Inspect these animals last to avoid cross-contamination to other animals at the facility. In addition, use of an N95 respirator without a valve is required when INDOORS within 6 feet of animals shown to be susceptible per the CDC.

- Some N95 models contain an exhalation valve. When an employee only has access to an N95 respirator with an exhalation valve, the employee must maintain at least 6 feet from COVID-19 susceptible species.

- For TB protection, N95 mask must be worn in accordance with the AC Safety & Health Handbook for non-human primates (NHP) or elephants.

- Regardless of vaccination status, masks are required to be worn indoors in public by all employees at all worksites (including private property entered for the purpose of inspection) located in counties with high levels of community transmission according to the CDC map. This is subject to change based on CDC recommendations.

- Additionally, follow CDC recommendations, state/local guidance, and/or individual facility requirements for protective measures when inspecting at public or private facilities.

- When not required, employees may choose to wear cloth, paper, or N95 masks. Additionally, employees may choose to conduct only 1 inspection per day for their safety. Please note that employees may not ask other individuals (government or non-government) whether they are fully vaccinated, and employees must remain respectful of others’ choices regarding mask wearing.

3. ADDITIONAL INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Employee Requirements:
- Apparently healthy and pass self-screening questions in section 4 below
- Medically cleared, fit tested, and equipped with proper model to wear N95 when it is required

Supervisor Requirements:
- Work with employees to complete reasonable accommodation process if pandemic conditions cause concern
- Allow for multiple vehicles (GOV or rental) to be driven to inspections with multiple inspectors if

---

1 Updated information regarding animals and COVID-19 can be found here.
**4. BEFORE CONDUCTING INSPECTION(S)**

- When preparing to conduct an inspection, the AC employee must ask him/herself the following set of 3 questions every day prior to departing their ODS:

  **Screening Question #1:** If you’ve recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19, do current CDC guidelines recommend that you follow a quarantine schedule?

  **Screening Question #2:** Do you currently have, or have you had within the last 24 hours, any cold or flu symptoms with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, acute respiratory distress, or other symptoms associated with COVID-19?

  **Screening Question #3:**
  
  1. In the past 10 days have you been diagnosed with COVID-19 (either tested positive or declared presumptive positive)? If “No,” then skip Part 2 of this screening question; if “Yes,” then answer Part 2 of this screening question.
  2. Does your healthcare provider or current CDC recommendations continue to advise that you stay away from others?

  If the employee answers “No” to all three questions, the employee can plan to conduct inspection(s) that day. If the employee answers “Yes” to any of the three questions, the employee may not leave their ODS for official duties. If any of the answers change to “Yes” following an inspection (e.g., someone at the facility becomes sick and tests positive within 10 days of the inspection), will they please notify you of the change in status (no personal information required) so you may follow recommended testing and quarantine.

- Upon arrival at an inspection destination, you may choose to ask the facility representative these 3 screening questions. If the facility representative ultimately answers “Yes” to any of the three questions, the employee may choose not to conduct an inspection and leave the facility (document according to Section 5). At the conclusion of the inspection, ask that if any of the answers change to “Yes” following the inspection (e.g., someone at the facility becomes sick and tests positive within 10 days of the inspection), you may follow recommended testing and quarantine.

- Don PPE in the following order:
  a. Sanitize hands
  b. Don a cloth/paper mask or N95 respirator (may be worn when the inspector deems it is necessary for his or her safety)
  c. Don face shield *(optional)*
  d. Don shoe/boot covers (if necessary, e.g., at a dog kennel)
  e. Re-sanitize hands
  f. Don gloves (only required if anticipating animal contact, such as at a dog kennel)

**5. CHOOSING NOT TO CONDUCT OR TO ABORT AN INSPECTION**
**Required Procedures for Facility Inspections During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

- If you feel ill at any point (see screening questions above), do not conduct an inspection or abort the inspection you have started. Document your time on your weekly activity sheet. Notify your supervisor and discuss whether or not to issue a focused inspection report.
- If the facility representative answers “Yes” to any of the 3 screening questions above, do not conduct an inspection. Log as a task in eFile in the Activity Box on the Accounts Page, “COVID – UNABLE TO INSPECT.” Follow up with the facility by phone in 10 days. When the facility can confirm that the answers to all 3 screening questions is “No”, proceed with attempting another inspection.
- If you abort an inspection for any reason, complete a Focused Inspection report for the areas you were able to inspect.
- Document the areas included in a focused inspection:
  a. Research facility: on the Research Facility Protocol Selection Worksheet
  b. Non-research facility: email your supervisor, “Due to COVID-19 concerns, a focused inspection was conducted on the following areas: (list areas inspected).”

**6. POST-INSPECTION PPE DOFFING**

- Remove PPE in the following order:
  a. Remove shoe covers, turning them inside out and place in trash bag
  b. Remove gloves by turning them inside out
  c. Sanitize hands. Sanitizer should be within easy reach in the GOV
  d. Remove face shield/respirator/mask and place in trash bag for disposal or other designated bag for laundering and re-use*
  e. Re-sanitize hands

*N95 respirators may be reused for up to 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use; however, the respirator must NOT be visibly soiled or damaged in any way, and it must retain its structural integrity so a proper seal is achieved EACH time it is donned for reuse (cup hands over the outside of the N95 and breathe in and out deeply to feel appropriate negative and positive pressure, respectively). Allow 12 hours before reuse of a single N95. Store used N95s planned for reuse in a clean, breathable container or hang where it will not become contaminated. Perform hand hygiene before and after touching or adjusting a respirator, and avoid touching respirator’s inside surface.

**APPENDIX 1: N95 RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING AND USE**

A. Prior to using an N95 respirator, the employee is responsible for respirator fit testing and training:

1. Complete form APHIS-29 to request evaluation by Federal Occupational Health (FOH); detailed instructions found here.
2. Complete FOH-22, OSHA Respiratory Medical Evaluation Questionnaire if provided by FOH.
3. Complete Respiratory Protection Training (AgLearn).
4. Follow the sequence below for fit testing:
   i. Schedule appointment with FOH for medical clearance evaluation.
   ii. After testing is complete, FOH will mail your medical clearance letter.
   iii. Ensure you are up to date on your AgLearn Respiratory Protection 2.0 training. Retain a copy of certificate of completion and provide to fit tester.
   iv. Inform your supervisor of your fit test needs.
Required Procedures for Facility Inspections During the COVID-19 Pandemic

v. Contact the APHIS Certified Fit Tester nearest you for assistance with scheduling a fit test.
vi. During fit testing appointment, provide the fit tester with a copy of your medical clearance letter.
vii. Once fit test is complete, send the results to your supervisor.
viii. Keep track of the expiration date for both your medical clearance and your fit test. About 90 days prior to earliest expiration date, begin this process again for renewal.

B. Approved NIOSH N95 Respirators for Use:

3M 8210+  3M 8110(S)  3M 8511  3M 8271  3M 9210+  3M 9211+

C. Recommended Donning Procedures for N95 Respirators:

Sanitize hands first!

1. Cup respirator in hand with straps hanging down, front strap + nose band toward fingers
2. Place respirator on face applying top strap first, followed by bottom strap!
3. Pinch nose piece to proper fit
4. Perform seal test!!

APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST OF BIOSAFETY AND BIOSECURITY SUPPLIES

- Disinfecting wipes x 1 container
- Bottle of hand sanitizer (60% or more alcohol concentration)
- Paper towels x 1 package/roll
- Disposable gloves x 1+ box
- Empty trash bag x 2
- Disposable shoe/boot covers x 1+ package
- Paper or cloth masks x 3 (paper masks may be given to facility representative if needed; ensure container and masks stay clean and don clean gloves before handing to them)
- N95 Respirators x 2 (if necessary based on animals to be inspected)
- Disposable plastic face shield x 2 (may be disinfected and re-used as needed)
- “Clean” container (plastic bag/tote/box) x 1+: for clean masks, respirators, face shields, etc.
- “Contaminated” container x 1: for used masks/other equipment to be cleaned/laundered
- Spare clean uniform/outerwear
- Flash storage drives x 3

Items on this list can be purchased with the Visa purchase card (you must obtain prior written approval from supervisor), or qualify for reimbursement via OF-1164, with the exception of uniforms (follow AC Uniform SOP).
APPENDIX 3: LIBRARY OF LINKS

AC Safety & Health Handbook
Safer Federal Workplace Task Force
USDA APHIS Coronavirus Updates
CDC Community Levels Map
CDC COVID-19 Guidance Library
CDC Face Covering Recommendations
CDC COVID-19 in Animals
CDC Testing & Quarantine
USDA APHIS AC Respiratory Protection Instructions
AgLearn Respiratory Protection
APHIS Certified Fit Tester List
CDC Quarantine and Isolation

CDC