



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
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Guidance on COVID-19 for Pest Management Professionals

The following recommendations to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (which causes COVID-19) are intended for technicians, managers, and others who work in the pest management industry. These are based on currently available information, which is likely to change as we learn more about COVID-19. This information is meant to provide a general overview of the measures that can be implemented and should not be interpreted as a directive. More detailed information can be found in the supplemental information provided.

- (1) Develop a response plan that outlines measures that your business is taking to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace (e.g., flexibility in work hours (staggered shifts), hosting meetings through video or telephone, allowing technicians to keep trucks at home) and at client locations (e.g., offer only exterior treatments, screen clients who require indoor service about signs of illness prior to entry).

Assess your essential functions to determine what services can continue in alignment with federal and state guidelines for reducing transmission.

- a. Importantly, identify the situations where an indoor treatment is necessary (e.g., to protect public health (cockroaches, rodents, fleas, etc.) or improve quality of life (ant infestations). Take appropriate steps to protect technicians during necessary indoor treatments (e.g., social distancing, calling client ahead of time to establish service procedures, handwashing before and after job completion, wearing appropriate PPE, etc.).

Have guidelines for employees that are sick or are caring for a sick family member.

- b. Employees who are exhibiting symptoms of illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home. Sick employees should follow CDC quarantine guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>. Sick employees can return to work only when the criteria for discontinuing home isolation have been met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments. Employees caring for a sick family member at home should notify their supervisor and follow CDC guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>. Employers should check the Department of Labor's guidance for employee sick leave and expanded family and medical leave: https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf

The response plan should be distributed to all employees with regular updates via text or email. Inform clients of the steps you are taking to reduce risk of COVID-19 and how this might change your scope of services and service procedures.

- (2) Maintain a healthy work environment by implementing healthy behaviors, such as proper sneezing and cough etiquette, social distancing (maintaining a physical distance between people of at least six feet), frequent and proper hand washing. Do not use another employees' office, phone desk, tools, and equipment. Limit client-technician direct interaction (e.g., only exterior treatments, no handshakes, social distancing) and time in the office. Technicians and other employees should have access to soap and water, alcohol-based sanitizer ($\geq 60\%$ alcohol), tissues and trash receptacles. Perform environmental cleaning of tools, equipment, and shared work areas with an EPA registered product that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
- (3) As the COVID-19 situation changes, it is important to maintain flexibility in scheduling and services. There may be disruptions to normal operations (e.g., increased employee absenteeism, supply chain disruption, changing demands from clients).

During this time there may be questions about whether pest control is an *essential service* and how this may impact continuation of business. Pest management plays an essential role in protecting public health by controlling disease vectors, securing our food supply and maintaining our infrastructure. This fact was recognized in a memorandum published by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), which identified pest management as an essential public work service: "*Workers such as plumbers, electricians, **exterminators**, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences*". <https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA-Guidance-on-Essential-Critical-Infrastructure-Workers-1-20-508c.pdf>.

In Arkansas, an emergency declaration for COVID-19 was signed on March 11th in executive order 20-03 (https://governor.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/executiveOrders/EO_20-03_1.pdf). This declaration does not include designations of what business operations are considered essential, and there is no specific mention of pest management or related fields.

In the event of a federal shelter-in-place (or similar) mandate, it is likely that pest control will be listed as essential critical infrastructure. If such an order would be issued, businesses will have discretion in the decision to remain open and/or change their scope of services.

In Arkansas, directives for business closure come from the Secretary of Health, with authority outlined in the Governor's executive order (EO 20-03), "*The Secretary of Health may issue orders of isolation and/or quarantine as necessary and appropriate to control this disease in the State of Arkansas, and the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, shall have sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and **restrictions on commerce and travel throughout the state.***" Previous directives to limit operations have focused on businesses where there is not a reasonable assurance of recommended social distancing and safety. It cannot be determined at this time which businesses may or may not have directives to limit operations filed against them in the future; although, based on the current trend it is unlikely that pest control services would be limited provided that social distancing and safety guidelines can be successfully implemented.

In the event of business closure or interruption of normal business operations due to COVID-19, there are economic resources available. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers disaster assistance to small businesses that have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through their Economic Injury Disaster Loan program (<https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19>). This program provides working capital loans of up to \$2 million to help overcome temporary loss of revenue. The SBA has approved Arkansas' Disaster Declaration #16372 for small business affected by Corona virus. Businesses located in all counties in Arkansas can apply at the SBA online portal (<https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>) or call 1 (800) 659-2955. Information on Disaster Loan requirements can be found here: https://www.arkansasstatechamber.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/AR_16372_Fact_Sheet_COVID_Gov_Cert_EIDL.pdf.

Pest control technicians, managers, and other workers that have been laid off can file unemployment insurance claims through the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services' (ADWS) online claims filing system EZARC (<https://www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov/>).

Supplemental information:

CDC COVID-19 information and resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

CDC Guidance for employers: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html

Arkansas Department of Health COVID-19 information and resources: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

Arkansas Department of Health Guidance for Employers: [https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/ADH_Guidance_for_Employers_\(flyer\).pdf](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/ADH_Guidance_for_Employers_(flyer).pdf)

OSHA Guidance for workplaces: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

National Pest Management Association COVID-19 information and resources: <https://www.pestcontrolcoronavirus.com/>

Social Distancing and Pest Control Operations in Multi-Family Housing During the COVID-19/Coronavirus outbreak: <https://ag.tennessee.edu/bedbugs/Documents/PestControlCovidFull2.pdf>

A PMPs guide to COVID-19: <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/files/ef651.pdf>

ADWS:

https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/src/files/Notice_to_Individuals_Inquiring_About_the_Availability_of_Unemployment_Insurance_Benefits_As_A_Result_of_the_COVID-19_Pandemic_Updated.pdf

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Notice frequently asked questions: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-poster-questions>