



## **One-Time Provision of PPE for Dairy Farm, Poultry Farm, and Slaughterhouse Workers**

**May 6, 2024**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is asking state and other jurisdictional health departments to make personal protective equipment (PPE) available to dairy farm, poultry farm, and slaughterhouse workers. This would consist of a one-time distribution of PPE from existing stockpiles. CDC made the ask today in a call with state health officials, state epidemiologists, state public health veterinarians, state public health emergency preparedness directors, and leadership from public health partner organizations.

Increasing access to PPE is intended to help people who work with animals reduce their risk of infection with [highly pathogenic avian influenza](#) (HPAI), which is currently causing an outbreak among dairy cattle. CDC believes the current risk to the public from these viruses is low; at the same time, people who have job-related exposures to infected animals, including lactating dairy cattle, may be at increased risk of infection.

### **Prioritizing PPE**

CDC asks that states prioritize distribution of PPE in two ways. First, to farms known to have positive or presumptive herds with HPAI. After those farms have been supplied, states should offer PPE to farms that have submitted samples for pre-movement PCR testing, and then to farms with no evidence of positive herds or any tests awaiting results.

The second area for prioritization is around which workers should receive PPE. CDC's [Updated Interim Guidance](#) focuses on those, “working with animals or materials, including raw milk, confirmed infected or potentially infected with these novel influenza A viruses.” Data from the current outbreak suggest that dairy cattle and select slaughterhouse workers may face an increased risk. Accordingly, workers on those farms should be prioritized for PPE.

CDC recommends that health departments work with their state agriculture colleagues to identify farmworker and related service organizations in their state. Those organizations can potentially assist health departments with identifying farms, collating orders, and coordinating distributions. It is CDC's expectation that farms supply workers with appropriate PPE following this one-time distribution.

### **Getting and distributing PPE**

- If jurisdictions do not have sufficient PPE on hand to meet demand for this one-time distribution, they can request PPE from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) (*i.e.*, face shields, gloves, goggles, N95® filtering facepiece respirators, and elastomeric half-mask respirators). More information about requesting SNS assets can be found at: [Requesting SNS Assets | SNS | HHS/ASPR](#)

- Health departments can distribute PPE to employers through a range of pathways, including directly to dairy employers or through farmworker organizations, state dairy associations, university extension agents, and other community outreach.

**Recommendations for worker protection and use of PPE** for people working with confirmed or potentially infected animals, materials, or surfaces are available [here](#).

- The recommended PPE to reduce the risk of exposure includes fluid-resistant coveralls, any NIOSH-approved® particulate respirator, safety goggles or a face shield, rubber boots or boot covers, a head or hair cover, and gloves.
- Information is still limited about ways in which the HPAI virus can spread from cows to humans, as one human illness has been identified to date. Recommendations for workers may be updated as CDC learns more during this evolving situation.
- There are considerations around heat illness, vision, and use of respirators that employers and workers should be aware of. For more information see [CDC's updated interim guidance](#).

N95 and NIOSH Approved are certification marks of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) registered in the United States and several international jurisdictions.

### Protect Yourself From H5N1 When Working With Farm Animals

H5N1 is a bird flu virus that could make you sick. Wear recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when working directly or closely with sick or dead animals, animal feces, litter, raw milk, and other materials that might have the virus.



**Wash hands with soap and water, then put on PPE in this order:**

1. Fluid-resistant coveralls
2. Waterproof apron, if needed for job task
3. NIOSH Approved® Respirator (e.g., N95® filtering facepiece respirator or elastomeric half mask respirator)
4. Properly-fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles or face shield
5. Head cover or hair cover
6. Gloves
7. Boots

Scan to learn how to put on and take off a respirator

#### While wearing PPE

- Use separate designated clean areas, one for putting on PPE and one for taking off PPE.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose after touching any contaminated material.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, vape, chew gum, dip tobacco, or use the bathroom.

#### Follow these steps to safely remove PPE

1. Remove the apron, if worn
2. Clean and disinfect boots
3. Remove boots
4. Remove coveralls
5. Remove gloves
6. Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
7. Remove goggles or faceshield and then remove respirator
8. Remove head cover or hair cover
9. Wash hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub

#### After removing PPE

- Shower at the end of the work shift.
- Leave all contaminated clothing and equipment at work.
- Watch for symptoms of illness while you are working with potentially sick animals or materials. Continue watching for symptoms for 10 days after finishing working. If you get sick, tell your supervisor and talk with a doctor.

#### Reusable and disposable PPE

- While removing PPE, dispose of all disposable PPE appropriately and set aside reusable PPE
- Clean and disinfect reusable PPE after every use

Scan to find more PPE and worker safety information



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *General*

- **What, specifically, is CDC asking states to do?**
  - CDC is asking states to help make PPE from their jurisdictional stockpiles available to dairy farm, poultry farm, and slaughterhouse workers to protect them against HPAI.
- **How much PPE should jurisdictions provide?**
  - There is no set amount. It depends on the needs of workers in your jurisdiction and available supplies.
- **Who should train workers in PPE use?**
  - Ultimately employers should train workers on proper PPE use. If jurisdictions are able to provide trainings for farm owners or workers, however, they should do so, as feasible.

### *Rationale/Approach*

- **On which workers are we focused?**
  - Consistent with our [updated interim guidance](#), CDC recommends focusing on those individuals who “work with animals or materials, including raw milk, confirmed infected or potentially infected with these novel influenza A viruses.”
  - Initially, CDC recommends focusing PPE distribution on dairy farm and select slaughterhouse workers.
  - Additional categories of agriculture workers can be added at the state’s judgement and discretion.
- **What epi data are these recommendations based on, given that there has only been one confirmed human case this year?**
  - Data from the current outbreak suggest that dairy cattle and select slaughterhouse workers are at increased risk of HPAI. These data include likely asymptomatic transmission among cattle as well as findings of HPAI virus in a dairy cow at a slaughterhouse.
  - In general, the wide geographic spread of HPAI viruses in wild birds, poultry, and some other mammals, including the current outbreak in cows, could create additional opportunities for people to be exposed to these viruses.
  - CDC believes the current risk to the general public from bird flu viruses is low. People who have job-related exposures to infected birds or animals, including cows, are at greater risk of contracting HPAI.

- **Why all states and not just those with affected cattle herds? And why all farms and not just those with affected cattle herds?**
  - Data around potential asymptomatic transmission of HPAI among cattle could mean that there are affected herds beyond those that are currently recorded.
  - CDC is recommending that health departments help make PPE available to people who work with dairy cattle, not indicating that it must be used in all areas and at all times.
  - Having PPE more readily available can help protect workers and reduce the risk of further spread of HPAI for higher risk exposures, which can include exposure to raw milk and udders from lactating dairy cattle.
  - Greater use of PPE during these exposures may reduce the risk when cattle are infected with HPAI but have not yet tested positive.
- **For how long will this recommendation last?**
  - This is not a new recommendation but rather an ask to health departments to help make PPE more available on a one-time basis to dairy workers with higher risk exposures. This ask is being made because the full scope of dairy cattle infections with HPAI is not known; recommendations may change as we learn more.

### ***Worker Safety and Health***

- **What are employer responsibilities?**
  - All PPE should be used in accordance with [OSHA regulations](#), including identifying appropriate PPE based on a [site-specific risk assessment](#).
  - Workers must be trained on and demonstrate an understanding of when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, what it looks like when PPE is properly fitted, how to properly put on, use, take off, dispose of, and maintain PPE, and the limitations of PPE.
  - Respirator use should be in the context of a comprehensive respiratory protection program in accordance with the OSHA [Respiratory Protection standard](#) and other applicable requirements. Detailed information on respiratory protection programs, including fit testing procedures, can be accessed at [OSHA's Respiratory Protection eTool](#).
- **What PPE is recommended?**
  - CDC provides [steps to reduce worker risk of infection](#) with avian influenza A viruses associated with severe disease when working with animals or materials, including raw milk, confirmed infected or potentially infected with these novel influenza A viruses. Recommended PPE to protect against novel influenza A viruses includes:
    - Disposable or non-disposable fluid-resistant coveralls, and depending on task(s), add disposable or non-disposable waterproof apron
    - Any NIOSH Approved® particulate respirator (e.g., N95® or greater filtering facepiece respirator, elastomeric half mask respirator with a minimum of N95 filters)
    - Properly fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles or a face shield if there is risk of liquid splashing onto the respirator



- Rubber boots or rubber boot covers with sealed seams that can be sanitized or disposable boot covers for tasks taking a short amount of time
- Disposable or non-disposable head cover or hair cover
- Disposable or non-disposable gloves

### ***Caches***

- **Can expired product be used?**
  - If there is an expiration date designated by the NIOSH approval holder (*i.e.*, respirator manufacturer) and it has been exceeded, it should not be used within an occupational respiratory protection program. Respiratory protective devices that have passed their expiration date are no longer considered NIOSH-approved for use in occupational settings.