** IFCA Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 for IFCA Members *Updated March 26, 2020***

 *Please visit* [*www.ifca.com*](http://www.ifca.com) *to see COVID-19 guidance documents issued by the state
 federal agencies. This FAQ is a summary of the main issues that affect IFCA members.*

**General Questions about Ag and Essential / Critical Infrastructure Workforce**

**Q:** **How does the Illinois “Stay in Place” order and the federal guidance affect agriculture?**

**A:**The Department of Homeland Security has defined [critical infrastructure](https://ifca.com/media/web/1585064684_DHS%20Critical%20Infrastructure%20Guidance.pdf) workforce exceptions. Agricultural activities are broadly included in the federal guidance and the [Illinois Stay in Place](https://ifca.com/media/web/1584974187_Illinois%20Stay%20at%20Home%20Order.pdf) order also includes workers and activities supporting the food production system in Illinois. At this point, anything IFCA members have normally been doing in the course of serving the industry can continue. However, everyone should follow guidance from the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html), as well as State and local government officials, regarding strategies to limit disease spread.

**Q: Do our employees need to carry an identification card stating they are essential agriculture workers?**

**A:** No. Identification is not required and will not be requested by law enforcement as you conduct essential agricultural duties. But common sense applies: operate safely, comply with traffic laws and report any accidents. If it eases your mind, IFCA prepared an essential industry worker template available at [www.ifca.com](http://www.ifca.com) that you can put on your company letterhead and have employees carry, but it is not necessary.

**Pesticide Questions**

**Q: I did not take my pesticide test before the Dept of Ag cancelled the testing. What now?**

**A:** If you had either an operator or an applicator license that expired on December 19, 2019, IDA has automatically extended your license until December 31, 2020. The same is true for private applicators who had expiring licenses. IDA will not send you a renewal letter, but will update their database extending your licenses at no fee. Commercial applicators must still meet the insurance requirements. Any expiring pesticide dealer licenses have also been extended until December 31, 2020. You must re-test next year.

**Q:** **I have new employees who have never had an operator license and need to pass General Standards. What should I do?**

**A:** IDA is allowing these employees to apply pesticides under the supervision of a licensed commercial applicator, for the activities in which the commercial applicator is licensed (i.e. field crops, rights of way, turf, etc.) You should provide them with general pesticide training. However, operators CANNOT apply the four dicamba products labeled for use on soybean, and cannot apply paraquat. Those applications can only be performed by a certified applicator (this is a federal requirement).

**Q: What if I was going to take the Field Crop exam (or other category exam) and did not get the chance before testing was cancelled?**

**A:** You have to pass a category exam to become a certified applicator. IDA hopes they can provide testing opportunities again soon, possibly on-line testing, realizing that the spray season is fast approaching.

Please visit the [IL Dept of Agriculture FAQ](https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/agr/Pesticides/Pages/Cancellations-FAQ.aspx) for more information on the pesticide licensing/testing changes.

**DOT Questions**

**Q: Can I still get a farm service restricted use CDL to transport ammonia nurse tanks?**

**A:** Yes. If you have a valid Class B license, the Secretary of State is still processing the applications. Complete the [application form](https://ifca.com/media/web/1584983893_SOSCovidFAQ.pdf) along with a letter that states the employee is working for a farm service company, and mail it to the Secretary of State address on the form. They will turn it around as fast as they can.

**Q: What about CDLs or medical cards that are expiring during this shutdown?**

**A:** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has provided extensions until June 30, 2020 for expiring CDLs and medical cards that were valid on February 29, 2020 and expired on or after March 1, 2020.

**Q: Is it possible to get a new CDL or a new CDL endorsement (hazmat, tanker, etc.) of any kind?**

**A:** Unfortunately, no. News CDLs and endorsements require testing and testing offices are closed for now.

**Q: Getting random and pre-employment drug tests for DOT employees is not possible right now with limited access to health care facilities. What can I do?**

**A:** FMCSA has issued guidance that states employers should still try all means possible to have DOT regulated employees tested if they are scheduled to test; if you cannot access these services you should document your efforts to do so. DOT employers should still monitor their DOT employees for reasonable suspicion and take appropriate actions to ensure safety, documenting your actions in these cases. **The pre-employment drug test is still required even in these times; you CANNOT place a new employee into a DOT regulated position without them passing the drug test.**

See the following guidance documents for more information on the DOT provisions:

[FMCSA Drug & Alcohol Testing](https://ifca.com/media/web/1584995358_Drug%20Alcohol%20DOT%20Guidance.pdf)
[FMCSA CDL & Medical Cards](https://ifca.com/media/web/1585086410_FMCSA%20Exceptions%20on%20CDLs%20%26%20Medical%20Cards.pdf)
[PHMSA Hazmat Training](https://ifca.com/media/web/1585052802_PHMSA%20Training%20Exception.pdf)
[Illinois Secretary of State FAQ on Driver Licenses, Vehicle Registration etc.](https://ifca.com/media/web/1584983893_SOSCovidFAQ.pdf)

**Labor Questions**

**Q: I have employees who need to be at home to care for children that have been dismissed from school, or for a family member who is ill. As their employer, what am I required to do?**

**A:** The [Family and Medical Leave Act](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla/index) entitles covered employers to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a designated 12-month leave year for specified family and medical reasons.
The U.S. Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division (WHD) also announced its first round of guidance to employees and employers about how each will be able to take advantage of the protections and relief offered by the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) when it takes effect on April 1, 2020.** FFCRA will help American businesses with fewer than 500 employees with funds to provide employees with paid leave, either for the employee’s own health needs or to care for family members. See this [Fact Sheet for Employees](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employee-paid-leave), [Fact Sheet for Employers](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave) and a [Questions and Answers](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-questions) document about this program.

**Other Questions?** You can reach the IFCA staff here:

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