



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Biosecurity at Agricultural Sites

I. Purpose

It is important for PDA personnel visiting agricultural sites to understand and follow biosecurity procedures and strictly adhere to the biosecurity plan in effect on the property. Agricultural sites include but are not limited to all farms, kennels, animal operations, animal feed plants, timber lands, crop production areas, and food manufacturing establishments.

In addition, under Act 125 of 2010, enacted on November 23, 2010, PDA employees could be charged with trespassing if they do not follow the landowner's posted biosecurity protective measures when they are within the landowner's posted agricultural biosecurity area.

The overall purpose of this SOP is to clarify Act 125 of 2010 requirements and to define basic biosecurity procedures that all PDA employees must follow, every time they visit an agricultural site. It is recognized that required biosecurity levels, such as protective clothing, could vary and is contingent upon several variables such as but not limited to: property owner requirements; type of agricultural products or animals on property; diseases, pests, or contaminants present; livestock and poultry in the immediate area; and, nature of the visit.

If no biosecurity requirements are specified at the site, it's always important to understand what your bureau or commission's biosecurity requirements are for the purpose of your visit.

This SOP is not intended to supersede an individual bureau's or commission's biosecurity procedures, rather it should provide a general framework for the entire department and should guide employees who do not have their own bureau/commission policy. All bureaus and commissions that visit agricultural sites should develop their own biosecurity protocol checklists, with this SOP serving as a model.

II. Scope

This SOP applies to all PDA personnel who must enter agricultural properties, agricultural lands, or other open lands, including woodlands, in any work-related capacity. This is applicable to all types of food, plant, animal, or agricultural facilities such as food manufacturing, food retail, kennels, dog breeders, animal feed plants, all animal operations, crop production farms, plant production greenhouses, nurseries, apiaries, timber operations, horticultural sites, etc.

III. Definitions - Agricultural Biosecurity Area

Agricultural Biosecurity Area



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Any of the following areas which have been identified by posted notice as an agricultural biosecurity area and for which the owner or other authorized person has established procedures to inhibit the transference of transmissible disease or hazardous substance.

- Agricultural or other lands as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3503 (b.2) (3) (relating to criminal trespass).
- A building or animal or plant containment area fenced or enclosed in a manner manifestly designed and constructed to exclude trespassers or to confine domestic animals and plants used in research or agricultural activity or farming as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3309 (relating to agricultural vandalism).

"Agricultural or other Open Lands" as defined in (18 Pa.C.S. § 3503 (b.2.) (3)):

Any land on which agricultural activity or farming, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3309 (relating to agricultural vandalism), is conducted or any land populated by forest trees of any size and capable of producing timber or other wood products or any other land in an agricultural security area as defined in the act of June 30, 1981 (P.L. 128, No. 43), known as the Agricultural Area Security Law, or any area zoned for agricultural use.

"Agricultural Activity or Farming" as defined in (18 Pa.C.S. § 3309 (c)):

"Agricultural activity" and "farming" include public and private research activity, records, data and data-gathering equipment related to agricultural products as well as the commercial production of agricultural crops, livestock or livestock products, poultry or poultry products, trees and timber products, milk, eggs or dairy products, or fruits or other horticultural products.

IV. Background - Agricultural Biosecurity Area

As of November 23, 2010, Pa. Act 125 of 2010 changed the trespass laws within the Commonwealth in a way that potentially impacts PDA employees in the course and scope of their duties. Act 125 allows the following:

- (a) A landowner may self-designate what area or areas constitute agricultural biosecurity areas.
- (b) A landowner may also self-define what measures are required to be performed for entry into their agricultural biosecurity area. PDA employees must follow the landowner's biosecurity protective measures in order to avoid a potential charge of trespassing.
- (c) Neither regulatory oversight nor governmental approval of the landowner's designations is necessary for them to be instituted. In addition, the law does not define what biosecurity protective measures the landowner may specify for personnel to take when preparing to enter an agricultural biosecurity area. The only limit placed on the landowner for these biosecurity protective measures is that they must be "reasonable."



- (d) The landowner must post a notice identifying both the agricultural biosecurity area and the biosecurity protective measures required for entry. There are no specific size or location requirements for the posted notice except that it is "in a manner which is reasonably likely to come to the attention of a person." Under 18 Pa.C.S. § 2303 (b.3). The criminal trespass laws have been changed to include the following:
1. A person commits an offense if the person does any of the following:
 - (i) Enters an agricultural biosecurity area, knowing that they are not licensed or privileged to do so; or,
 - (ii) Knowingly or recklessly fails to perform reasonable measures for biosecurity that by posted notice are required to be performed for entry to the agricultural biosecurity area.
 2. It is a defense to prosecution under paragraph (1)(ii) that:
 - (i) No reasonable means or method was available to perform the measures that the posted notice required to be performed for entry to the agricultural biosecurity area; or,
 - (ii) Entry is made in response to a condition within the agricultural biosecurity area that the person reasonably believes to be a serious threat to human or animal health as necessitating immediate entry to the agricultural biosecurity area; or,
 - (iii) Entry is made under exigent circumstances by a law enforcement officer to:
 - A. Pursue and apprehend a suspect of criminal conduct reasonably believed by the officer to be present within the agricultural biosecurity area; or,
 - B. Prevent the destruction of evidence of criminal conduct reasonably believed by the officer to be located within the agricultural biosecurity area.
 3. Offenses:
 - (i) Except as set forth in subparagraph (iii), an offense under paragraph (1)(i) constitutes a misdemeanor of the third degree.
 - (ii) Except as set forth in subparagraph (iii), an offense under paragraph (1)(ii) constitutes a summary offense.
 - (iii) If an offense under paragraph (1) causes damage to or death of an animal or plant within the agricultural biosecurity area, the offense constitutes a misdemeanor of the first degree.



4. The terms "agricultural biosecurity area" and "posted notice" in this SOP shall have the same meanings as those given to them in 3 Pa.C.S. § 2303 relating to definitions.

V. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – General Biosecurity Requirements

Adhere to the following prior to conducting any visit, inspection or survey:

1. Unannounced inspections are permitted as part of the PDA's routine monitoring programs, and are at times necessary. If possible, contact the property owner or manager before arriving on-site to determine what biosecurity measures are used for that property. PDA personnel must follow the agricultural biosecurity measures prescribed for the site. If unaware of the biosecurity measures at the property, every effort should be made to contact the operator or the person in charge upon arrival.
2. Make sure vehicle is routinely cleaned inside and out, including trunk space.
3. If possible, carry in your vehicle: a clean change of clothes; tyvec coveralls, disposable coveralls, or laundered coveralls; rubber over-shoe boots or disposable booties; disposable gloves; disposable hair nets or hats; several trash bags; paper towels; bucket and scrub brush; hand sprayer; water source, disinfectant; alcohol wipes; and anti-bacterial soap or hand sanitizer.
4. Always understand your bureau/commission's biosecurity requirements for the type of property you are visiting, and if possible know if the property owner has special or unique requirements before arriving.
5. Ensure all sampling equipment and materials brought onto the site are in clean and sanitary condition.
6. Staff taking employees or interns who are not familiar with PDA's biosecurity policy will advise them of all appropriate measures needed for the visit and ensure protocols are followed.

Upon arriving at any agricultural property:

1. Keep windows closed and always try to park in a clean area away from animals, livestock handling areas, waste disposal areas, feed storage areas, and do not drive through manure, run-off, or animal concentration areas, if at all possible. If vehicle travel around the facility is necessary, try to use on-site vehicles.
2. When arriving at a site, check for posted notices of agricultural biosecurity areas. For example, the notices may be posted at the driveway entrance, along the driveway, around the property, at kennels, and on buildings housing animals. Stop and read the requirements on the posted notice for all agricultural biosecurity areas and do not enter unless you can fulfill the requirements.



3. If there is a posted biosecurity requirement, determine whether you have the tools, supplies, and equipment required by the landowner or operator, and notify your supervisor unless you obtained permission to enter beforehand. If you are unable to fulfill the posted biosecurity requirements, leave the site and contact your supervisor.
4. Ensure you understand your bureau/commission's biosecurity requirements for the type of activity you are conducting and facility you are visiting.
5. Do not access any areas that you do not have authority to enter. Contact your supervisor if there are any questions.
6. Before entering and departing any agricultural site, ensure footwear is clean and free of organic material. If an agricultural site such as a crop production area is determined to be "high-risk" because of a disease investigation or other circumstance, management will convey what additional protective measures should be implemented for the high-risk site. An example of an additional protective measure that could be implemented for high-risk sites is the wearing of over-boots or booties.
7. Visually clean clothing, coveralls, or disposable coveralls should be worn at each facility where staff conducts inspections of the production areas or fields at an operation. It is not necessary to change between every site visit, unless there is a need to. Clean coveralls or disposable coveralls must be worn inside the animal housing or production areas. Disposable coveralls do not need to be impermeable to liquids, but do need to adequately act as a barrier to dust, dirt, and manure. Clean clothing also applies to headwear, such as ball caps or hard hats. Headwear may be required by the site or based on the type of inspection being conducted.
8. When inspecting livestock facilities, do not visit more than one operation with the same animal type per day if possible. If known, visit the low-risk operation first and graduate toward higher-risk operations. Farm visits are not limited to one operation per day if the facility does not have livestock or if the visit is strictly for education and outreach with no inspection of the operation's production areas or other locations where livestock are present.
9. Unless necessary, do not enter the animal housing or feeding areas. When inspecting livestock areas start with young stock and move to older animals. Avoid walking through manure or feed. Avoid sick animals unless it is necessary.
10. Wear disposable gloves when handling food, plant or animal materials, based on risk. Bag all worn garments after use and if possible, dispose at the facility.
11. Use clean sampling equipment when collecting samples and clean equipment between samples. Ensure samples are bagged and properly identified prior to leaving collection area.
12. Any equipment that comes into contact with food, plant or animal material should be cleaned and sanitized between establishments or between multiple locations at a single facility.



13. Wash or sanitize your hands upon arrival and before leaving the site. Ask the owner if access to water is available at the facility for hand washing and/or disinfection.

When concluding inspection, survey, or visit and before departing:

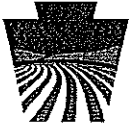
1. Clean all equipment prior to placing back in vehicle.
2. Place any samples collected into an appropriately protected container.
3. Before re-entering your vehicle, remove and bag, boot covers and disposable coveralls for disposal or clean and disinfect rubber boots with a commercial disinfectant or bleach. It is extremely important to remove all material such as manure, mud, debris, etc., from your entire boot prior to disinfection. Organic material severely compromises the effectiveness of disinfection products. If reusable coveralls were used, remove and separately bag them. Wash coveralls before using them again.
4. All disposable coveralls, boots, gloves, hairnets, paper towels, etc., should be disposed of at the site, if possible. If not, such materials must be placed in a garbage bag and sealed until they can be properly disposed of at an appropriate location off-site.
5. Segregate dirty equipment and supplies from clean equipment and supplies to avoid cross-contamination. When cleaning or sanitizing equipment, coveralls, over-shoe boots or any other materials, do so in such a manner as to ensure no cross-contamination occurs and to ensure the cleaning or sanitizing agent does not cause damage to plants or animals at the location.
6. Clean hands with sanitizing wipes or with warm, soapy water.
7. Visibly check vehicle for "hitch-hiking" pests and other materials. Be sure to remove before leaving.
8. When cleaning your vehicle, follow your bureau/commission's biosecurity protocol, however if your vehicle is visibly dirty from your visit, you should clean the tires before departing and go to a car wash.

When entering areas designated as quarantine areas:

1. Contact your supervisor for instructions before entering. Depending on the nature of the quarantine you might not be able to obtain approval to enter. If permission to enter is obtained, all requirements must be complied with.

VI. Guidelines for Animal Disease Outbreak Situations

For animal disease outbreaks, such as dangerously transmissible or zoonotic disease outbreaks, the Secretary of Agriculture and State Veterinarian will determine what type of enhanced biosecurity protocols are necessary should PDA staff have an emergency



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need to visit the animal operation for any reason during the outbreak. During these instances, PDA will develop specific guidance for industry and PDA employees.

The PDA staff should notify the Bureau of Animal Health any time there is an emergency need to visit the farm that is affected by the enhanced biosecurity protocols.

The following is intended to provide a sense of heightened biosecurity procedures that may be required in an atypical disease outbreak situation:

1. Traffic Flow

- Vehicles may be required to park off-premises
- Vehicles entering premises may be required to be cleaned and disinfected before exiting premises or washed after leaving the premises
- Visiting multiple operations the same day may be prohibited

2. Disinfection

- Use of specific disinfectants and procedures may be required depending on the nature of the disease outbreak (certain disease pathogens are time-sensitive and disinfection protocols may include the passage of time)

3. Protective Clothing

- Non-porous disposable coveralls, gloves, hair caps, face shields, respirators, etc., could all be required depending on the characteristics of the disease outbreak

4. Equipment

- Equipment may be quarantined and confined to the operation where it was used for a period of time depending on the nature of the disease outbreak

VII. Guidelines for Food Processing Plants and Flood-related Food Inspections

1. Often times, food processing plants will require PDA inspectors to wear laboratory coats and other items while conducting inspections. The Bureau of Food Safety provides laboratory coats to inspectors as needed.
2. Food inspectors are provided biosecurity and personal protective equipment for emergency response-related activities. These supplies should be considered for situations such as flood-related food inspections where inspectors could come into contact with floodwaters and other potential contaminants.



VIII. Other Guidelines and Considerations

1. Staff taking employees or interns who are not familiar with this biosecurity policy to an agricultural site, will advise them of all appropriate biosecurity measures needed for the visit and ensure that protocols are followed.
2. On a case by case basis, operations with multiple facilities under the same management with the same livestock type may be visited on the same day with the owner/operator's permission. In this situation, contact your supervisor for approval.

IX. Disinfection Products and Supplies

Disinfectants:

The following types of product classes and solutions may be used to disinfect boots, vehicle tires, or other appropriate surfaces before, during, and/or after farm site visits/inspections. The following products are effective against a broad range of disease-causing organisms when used properly and effectively. Employees shall adhere to all label instructions, warnings, etc. for use of a given product. Trade names are listed where applicable and are for information and reference use only and are not intended to suggest use of a specific brand.

1. Hypochlorite (bleach) – minimum bleach solution of 10%
2. Chlorhexadine –common trade names Nolvasan, Virosan
3. Iodophors – common trade name Betadyne
4. Phenols – common trade names Lysol, Environ, One-Stroke
5. Ammonium/Alcohol blends – common trade name Discide
6. Oxidative – Virkon

Supplies:

- Clean rubber boots or new disposable boot covers
- Clean change of clothes or coveralls (washable or disposable)
- Appropriate disinfectant chemicals or solutions
- Water (minimum 3-5 gallons)
- A bucket or tray to contain disinfectant
- Long-handled scrub brush
- Hand sprayer to apply disinfectant to boots, tires, other surfaces
- Clean bags for trash disposal or storage of items to be cleaned
- Antibacterial soap, wipes, and/or hand sanitizer
- Paper towels
- Disposable hairnets