

Key Points:

- Cohort/Group Shelter: Where is the justification, scientific basis for only having up to 15 persons?
- If the agencies retain the group shelter provisions, at the very least they need to clarify that all of the rules other than the sleeping room rules continue to apply to workers living in group shelters. The density of workers living in these conditions raises their risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 once any other occupant is exposed.
- Where is the data supporting elimination of bunk beds?
- Need for enforceable regulation relating to visitors. Seems arbitrary and capricious to enforce rules to an employer if there is not “buy in” from the employees.
- A general committee needs to be formed from stakeholders in the industry as well as people involved in policy-making.
- Allow housing rule to expire, no scientific backing. No legal basis to extend.
- Need stronger rules.
- Request that the state continue with the temporary rule as currently outlined until the end of harvest or until an endemic problem arises that requires emergency attention. Until that time, we recommend that any violations of the rule be enforced accordingly as to not unnecessarily penalize employers who are successfully applying the temporary rule.
- Transportation.
- Testing protocol should be adjusted
- Concerns about the precedent of extending an emergency rule beyond the 120 days allowed using this procedure, we also recognize that at this time COVID-19 remains a hazard that must be addressed.
- Variance procedure needs work.
- Eliminate the language regarding variances. Including variance language here suggests to operators that compliance with these regulations may not be needed.
- More guidance/FAQ’s are needed.
- Governor Inslee’s prohibition on evictions appears to contradict DOH’s TWH emergency rules that disallows occupancy of the top bunk. If TWH is occupied but the top bunk cannot be used, housing providers must essentially evict the person in the top bunk and violate the eviction moratorium in order to comply with TWH rules. Please clarify these contradictory edicts.
- The science regarding the transmission of Covid-19 has developed since these regulations were first adopted. Also, the capacity for testing and the availability of PPE have both grown dramatically. The new regulations must reflect those changes.
- Now that face masks are readily available this requirement should be made more specific and mandatory.
- Require additional portable sinks and stoves where occupants use common kitchens.