

From: [Stockman, Tina](#)
To: [Soil & Water Conservation Program](#); [DNR.Soil and Water Conservation Districts staff](#)
Cc: [DNR.SWC Staff](#)
Subject: RE: Update on COVID Procedures
Date: Friday, November 20, 2020 9:51:59 AM

THIS EMAIL IS BEING SENT ON BEHALF OF KURT BOECKMANN, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Good morning.

Governor Parson signed Executive Order 20-19 on November 19, 2020 that extends the state of emergency until March 31, 2021 for Missouri in response to COVID-19. Governor Parson also issued a [Public Health Warning](#) outlining expectations for everyone in Missouri. Missouri is seeing an increase in the number of positive cases on a daily basis. There is a dashboard at <https://showmestrong.mo.gov/> that shows the statistical numbers for the state. Another tool is the COVID-19 [Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool](#). This tool shows the risk level of attending an event, given the size and location of the event.

As the positive cases are increasing across the state, there have been impacts to the NRCS and SWCD offices. Since November 1st, NRCS and FSA have addressed over 125 cases in USDA offices of staff (NRCS, FSA, SWCD or Partners) that have either been infected with COVID or had first order exposure. In some situations, all staff had to be out of the office for 7 days due to an infected staff being in the office. Scott Edwards (NRCS State Conservationist) and Jeremy Mosley (FSA Acting State Director) addressed some items with their staff that will also impact the SWCD staff over the next couple of weeks from November 23rd to December 4th. The district conservationist will be addressing the items with NRCS and SWCD staff.

During this time period, we ask the SWCD supervisors and employees to take into consideration how business is being conducted. If board meetings are being held, every consideration should be given to hold the meetings virtually instead of in person. Instructions were emailed to district staff on how to setup a virtual meeting using Webex which will provide an option to hold the meeting as a conference call. Field visits can still be made but staff are encouraged to use every precaution to social distance and wear a face covering if needed.

Furthermore we would encourage the boards to communicate to staff if they don't feel 100% well, they should not come into the office and they should take leave or work remotely. District staff may have limitations working remotely if they don't have availability to a NRCS laptop. MOSWIMS is available on a public domain and doesn't have to be accessed from the state computer. The address for MOSWIMS is <https://apps5.mo.gov/swims/>. Also district staff can access their state email through <https://webmail.mo.gov> from any internet connection.

If district staff are sick or quarantined, there are options for the district boards to consider if staff can't telework. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions apply from April 1, 2020 through Dec. 31, 2020. More information on this act can be found on the US Department of Labor website <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra>. The board needs to review their leave policies to

determine if any accommodations can be made for the employees. Depending on the situation, some boards have approved staff to be on paid administrative leave. If the board does approve paid administrative leave, they should establish guidance on how long the leave is available and the requirements for staff to use administrative leave. It is also important that staff are informed what their options are up front so they are prepared if they become sick. There have been reports of employees coming to work sick because they were not sure of the leave available to them and feared having to take leave without pay.

With next week being Thanksgiving Day, it is a big holiday for families gatherings. As staff return to work after being in large gatherings whether it is a family, school or church functions, staff should consider teleworking for several days after these events. Most of the cases that NRCS and FSA have addressed since November 1st have been the result of the staff attending a function away from work.

Beginning Monday, November 23, I am directing my staff to not attend board meetings or go to any USDA office until further notice. If you have questions or would like guidance in setting up meetings or policy questions please contact your district coordinator.

Thank You!

Kurt Boeckmann
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Thank you.
Soil and Water Conservation Program

We'd like your feedback on the service you received from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. Please consider taking a few minutes to complete the department's Customer Satisfaction Survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MoDNRsurvey>. Thank you.