



## Metro Blooms

310 East 38<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 320  
PO Box 17099,  
Minneapolis, MN 55417  
651-699-2426  
[www.metroblooms.org](http://www.metroblooms.org)

## Metro Blooms Workplace Policies: COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic presents great challenges in our daily lives. The health and safety of the community and our staff is utmost in our minds as we adapt our work to the situation. We hope this information is helpful in explaining our operational changes. We will continue to update this as we keep current with developments.

### General Operations

Our physical office is closed to the public at this time. However, our staff are continuing to work their regular hours remotely. As always, we can be reached by [telephone and email](#).

Metro Blooms directors will stay informed about the most current CDC guidelines for Covid-19, and will communicate with employees, our clients, and our community as appropriate about any changes to policies, procedures or protocols.

We rely on our employees to self report any COVID-19 symptoms to maintain the safety of our staff, our clients, and our community.

*Self Reporting: Temperature should be taken at home daily before reporting to the office, a job site or client meeting. It is up to each employee to assess themselves each day.*

- It is extremely important to self-report and stay home if feeling ill or reading temperature over individual normal (or 100°), whichever is lower.
- **Employees who are showing signs of fever, chills, cough, or shortness of breath are prohibited from coming to work, and should alert their supervisor as soon as they are able.**
- Sick pay is available for all employees showing COVID-19 symptoms, or those who are quarantined due to doctor's orders

### Workshops, Consultations and Design

#### Blue Thumb Lawns to Legumes Workshops

Our annual resilient yards workshops are being offered as **webinars** rather than as in-person workshops. The webinars happen in real time on the Zoom platform, allowing for interaction among the presenters and attendees. [Learn more.](#)

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

## Site Consultations and Design

Metro Blooms is currently performing virtual consultations in order to protect the health and safety of our staff and clients. The following are guidelines for designers in proceeding with designs for general and neighborhood virtual consultations.

We will re-evaluate when to open back up for in-person consultations at the end of the stay-at-home order.

Note: We offer on-site consultations currently in special circumstances, i.e., for clients who are unable to do so virtually.

### *Guidelines for making site visits*

- Get permission from the client to visit their property (preferably in an email) and let them know a 1-2 hour time window when you will be there.
- If the client comes outside during the site visit, the designer will provide the client with direction on following social distancing guidelines. For example, Designer can say 'Metro Blooms requires social distancing for site visits. Please stay on your porch/patio/front steps and I will stay here.'
- Designer should maintain a minimum of 10' from the client.
- Metro Blooms requires that Designers wear masks for their own and for client safety. Talk loudly so others can hear you with your mask on.
- The designer will be prepared to take measurements without the help of the client, i.e., holding the end of the tape measure.
- If clients do not follow social distancing guidelines, designer should feel comfortable stating Metro Blooms requires social distancing and that they need to leave.

## Safe Outdoor Work Policy

The State of Minnesota has implemented comprehensive measures to [prevent the spread of COVID-19](#). We are following developments carefully as they apply to the green industry sector. We have implemented protocols to protect our staff and the public during our outdoor work. In addition to the operational guidelines above, these include:

1. *Ability to Work: Employees are allowed to make their own decision regarding outdoor work **as long as they feel well and are not showing any COVID-19 symptoms.***
  - No penalties for declining to work outdoors during the virus outbreak, with the caveat that this may be the only work we can offer during this time.
  - If you or anyone in your household feels sick or shows signs of Covid-19 plan to stay home and alert your supervisor per [CDC guidelines](#). Sick pay is available to all employees.
2. *Travel: Best social distancing practice is for employees to arrive to job sites via non-motorized transit, in their own vehicle, or as solo driver of Metro Blooms truck*

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

- When absolutely necessary, employees may ride up to two people in the Metro Blooms work truck, with masks on, windows down, and the passenger in the back seat on the opposite side of the truck. Employees that ride together should discuss this directly and decide for themselves if this is something that they feel safe doing.
- Stay away from other people's vehicles, even the outside of the vehicle
- Crew members may arrive at job sites by public transit or non-motorized transport such as bicycles, but are responsible for getting to the next job site on their own if the crew is working at multiple locations during a single day. There may be times when commuting by public transit or bicycle is not reasonable, ie. when several maintenance visits are spread out over long distances. It is up to crew members to communicate with the crew leader in order to determine when commuting by bike is feasible.
- Employees who commute using their own vehicles are eligible for mileage reimbursement only when driving between job sites. Trips from home to the day's first site, and from the day's last site to home are not eligible, unless travel is farther than an employee's typical work commute, in which case the additional mileage is reimbursable.

3. *Equipment: Crew members do not share equipment, as much as is logistically possible*

- After receiving a daily field assignment from the crew leader, crew members should disinfect shared items and surfaces before and after use using a bleach solution, including reusable bins and buckets and shared tools
- Sometimes sharing equipment is unavoidable. For example, carrying heavy objects or demonstrating how to use a tool. Wash or sanitize hands any time that you interact closely with another crew member. Whenever possible, sanitize handles and other touch-surfaces before using shared equipment.
- Employees may be asked to check out certain tools and keep them in their vehicles for use over an extended period of time
- Tablets, phones, and other electronic devices will not be shared.
- Do not share cigarettes, drinks, or food items. There will be no snacks handed out by the company or others for sharing.

4. *PPE: Personal protective equipment and washing/sanitizing stations will be provided by Metro Blooms at every work site*

- Hand soap, paper towels and a water jug dedicated to hand-washing will be provided at each job site. Sanitary guidelines for using the handwashing site will be posted at the station and should be followed each time the station is used.
- Fabric face masks will be provided to all employees. Everyone is expected to wear their masks when working near other employees, clients, or community members.
- Each crew member will receive several pairs of gardening gloves at the beginning of the season. For gloves or other clothing items worn in the garden that need to be laundered, don't shake laundry and wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest water possible. Dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with a sick person can be safely washed with other people's items.
- A tool sanitizing station will be set up at every job site. Employees will spray down tools with a 10% bleach solution when grabbing a tool and when returning one.
- Metro Blooms' truck, trailer, and equipment will be sanitized daily by the crew leader

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

- If employees must leave the job site to use a bathroom facility, employee will wash their hands upon return to the job site.

5. *Social Distancing: Field employees must follow the CDC guidelines of at least a 6' space between themselves and other people at all times*

- Many of our sites are large, and a minimum distance of 10' should be followed whenever possible. This is especially true when standing and facing each other, such as during safety or instructional meetings
- Employees adhere to the 6' requirement while taking breaks, as well as while working.
- Employees should all be spatially aware, and should do their best to stay out of other people's space
- If a client, homeowner, staff person, or other member of the public is encountered in the course of field work, crew will avoid any type of direct contact. It is okay to say out loud, "I am going to maintain a 10' distance while we talk."
- We encourage non-contact methods of greeting one another.
- No visitors are allowed to job sites during the course of work.
- Employees are intentional about not touching shared surfaces, such as playgrounds, door handles, or railings. If touching a shared surface, wash or sanitize your hands immediately afterwards.
- If employees must leave the job site to use a bathroom facility, employee will wash their hands upon return to the job site.

6. *Communication + Tracking: Crew safety policies are communicated daily from landcare manager and crew leader to field staff*

- Crew leaders will use markers or create lines with stakes and tape to help people flow in and out of work sites and maintain a minimum 6 feet distance while working.
- Crew leader and landcare manager, along with Metro Blooms directors, will stay informed about the most current CDC guidelines for Covid-19, and will communicate any changes to policies, procedures or protocols.
- Crew leader and landcare manager will facilitate regular crew check ins and provide reminders about safety and best practices.
- Crew members should feel safe in their work environment. If there are any concerns about safe distancing, protocols or field activities, it is important to communicate concerns with the crew leader or landcare manager.
- Reminders and important updates will be sent to all crew members through text message
- Staff continuously track their time in TSheets to provide daily work logs and ease employee contact tracing

## **Job Hazard Analysis**

Metro Blooms staff have low exposure risk to COVID-19. Social distancing measures are strict and enables us to carry out the majority of our work without direct contact with others. Two instances where social distancing may not be possible, and associated mitigation strategies are below:

- Sometimes sharing equipment is unavoidable. For example, carrying heavy objects or demonstrating how to use a tool. Anytime equipment is shared, employees must wash or

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

sanitize their hands prior to and upon completion of using the tool and must sanitize the tool upon completion of use.

- When absolutely necessary, employees may ride up to two people in the Metro Blooms work truck. Both employees must wear masks for the duration of the ride, have the windows rolled down, and the passenger should be in the back seat on the opposite side of the truck as the driver. Employees that ride together should discuss this directly and decide for themselves if this is something that they feel safe doing.

## COVID-19 Response Plan

*In the event that a Metro Blooms employee shows symptoms of being infected by the Covid-19 virus, or has been in direct contact\* with someone who is showing symptoms, the following actions will be taken:*

***\*Contact is considered direct and staff at risk if they have touched the same shared surface(s) as the patient without disinfecting in between or have been within 6 feet of the patient for more than 10 minutes during the 48-hour period before the onset of symptoms.***

- Employees who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 [as defined by the CDC](#) or who have been in direct contact with someone showing symptoms should leave work immediately and notify their direct supervisor.
- Employee should call their healthcare provider to determine if quarantine is necessary and to request a test. [Testing centers can be found here.](#)
- The employee's direct supervisor alerts Metro Blooms' Associate Director, who will notify other staff Directors, retaining staff privacy and anonymity. Metro Blooms Associate Director will reach out to the symptomatic employee and ask them to identify all individuals they were in direct contact with (see above definition) in the 48-hour period before the onset of symptoms so other staff can be notified. Metro Blooms ensures the privacy and anonymity of staff.
- All staff who have been in direct contact with the symptomatic person within the 48-hour period before the onset of symptoms will be sent home from work immediately.
- Staff may work from home if they feel up to it but are prohibited from returning to the office, visiting clients, or returning to field work for two weeks, or one week following the conclusion of all virus symptoms, assuming a positive COVID test.
- Metro Blooms employees that have not been in direct contact with the person showing symptoms may continue to work in the field or at the office.
- All shared surfaces, equipment and vehicles that the employee with symptoms has come in contact with in the 48-hours preceding the onset of symptoms will be rigorously disinfected before additional use.
- Clients will be notified if an employee, or someone an employee has been in direct contact with, is showing symptoms and has been on their property or in direct contact with the client in the 48-hours preceding symptoms.
- Metro Blooms will not discriminate against anyone who has had symptoms of COVID-19. Employees are allowed to return to work one week following the conclusion of all virus symptoms, or upon approval by a physician, whichever is later.

## Sick Pay

- Metro Blooms will cover 3 days of sick pay at the employee's average daily hours, minus any hours worked remotely, while symptomatic or quarantined employees seek physician input and

*Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.*

Grow. Bloom. Inspire!

a COVID test. This may be extended depending on wait times for testing and is in addition to any accrued PTO the employee may have.

- If an employee or someone an employee is caring for tests positive for COVID-19, they are covered for 2 weeks of sick leave at their average weekly hours, minus any hours worked remotely if they feel up to it. Employees are not required to use their accrued PTO during these 2 weeks. This time is covered under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. If an employee must be out of work for more than 2 weeks, they may use their accrued PTO.

*Lack of income should not require an employee to return to work before they are feeling well and symptom free. Employees may go negative in their PTO balance if needed after the initial 2 weeks of sick leave.*

- If an employee with symptoms tests negative for COVID-19, they can use their accrued PTO until they feel well enough to start working again.

*We ask that all staff feeling ill, whether positive for COVID-19 or not, work remotely until they are symptom free.*