

Gov. Evers: Announces statewide efforts to distribute PPE to schools, food processors, businesses

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today announced additional efforts to distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to schools, food processors, and businesses across the state. Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) will begin shipping more than 2 million cloth face masks and more than 4,200 infrared thermometers to K-12 public, charter, and private schools throughout the state. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is also helping to facilitate the delivery of approximately 60,000 masks to local food processors and businesses.

“Whether it’s a school, cheese plant, or restaurant, we are doing everything we can to ensure that everyone has access to the essential resources and PPE they need to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said Gov. Evers. “As our economy continues to reopen, we know businesses want to protect their customers and workers, and schools across our state are preparing to reopen safely for our kids, educators, and staff, so these efforts now are critically important to ensure they have the resources and supplies they need to keep folks safe.”

A survey was sent to school administrators in mid-June to determine their interest in an allotment based on existing enrollment information. At least 398 public school districts, 23 charter schools and 617 private schools indicated they would like to receive supplies, with more requests expected. The shipments are intended to supplement additional efforts districts may choose to undertake to purchase masks and other PPE.

“Risk mitigation and health factors will drive decisions regarding school operations

this fall,” State Superintendent Carolyn Stanford Taylor said. “This allocation of cloth masks and thermometers will greatly help Wisconsin schools as they plan appropriately for students to return to school. I am grateful for the partnership between the DPI and WEM, which further supports schools as officials work to ensure the safety and health of our students, educators, and families.”

In addition to the supplies, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Department of Health Services (DHS) collaborated on guidance for schools related to the use of cloth masks and thermometers. This guidance was distributed to schools earlier this month and is available at: https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/pdf/Education_Forward_web.pdf.

“Wisconsin’s agricultural and food businesses have faced many challenges throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Acquiring sufficient PPE has been a significant hurdle, especially for small, local businesses,” said Secretary-designee Randy Romanski. “DATCP is proud to connect the dots with Gov. Evers and WEM to help Wisconsin’s food processors, restaurants, grocers, and convenience stores access the resources they need to ensure the safety of their employees and customers.”

The approximately 60,000 masks for which the DATCP is facilitating distribution includes 22,500 masks for the Wisconsin Restaurant Association, 22,500 masks for small grocers through the Wisconsin Grocers Association, 8,000 masks for small food processors through the Midwest Food Products Association, 2,500 masks for small cheese plants through the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, 2,000 masks for small meat processors, and 2,000 masks for the Wisconsin Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association for public-facing workers. The cloth masks and infrared thermometers were supplied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency at no cost to the state.