



COVID-19 GUIDANCE: Retail Food/Manufacturing –

Procedures for Sanitization and Diagnosed Employees

Good retail and manufacturing practices should be emphasized for all food establishments including handwashing procedures, cleaning and sanitating using appropriate chemicals, and personal hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This document serves as guidance to food facility operators, owners, and other individuals to incorporate into their procedures in addition to regular operational protocols.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has stated that currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. The virus is thought to mainly spread from person-to-person. Governor Wolf has identified the food supply chain as life-sustaining businesses, and it is critical that these businesses implement social distancing and regular cleaning throughout their standard operating procedures to protect and maintain their workforce. Any business operations that can be conducted remotely should transition to telework whenever possible to limit possible exposure to employees who must report to work. Life-sustaining businesses should review their standard operating procedures to incorporate social distancing of at least 6 feet between employees whenever possible.

Although this document is targeted for retail and manufacturing facilities, the below information is applicable to all food preparation and distribution entities. All life sustaining businesses producing, processing, packaging, or distributing food (food banks, grocery stores, soup kitchens, and others) should utilize the below best practices. It is important to note that the FDA has stated that foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission. COVID-19 is spread by human to human contact and therefore personal hygiene is critical to limiting the spread of this virus.

What sanitation procedures need to be put in place with COVID-19?

HANDWASHING

- Use warm water, apply soap and lather for at least 20 seconds, and rinse. Use single-use paper towels to dry and use paper towel to turn off faucet.
- Wash hands frequently including:
 - ✓ After using the restroom
 - ✓ Before and after eating
 - ✓ Before handling food
 - ✓ After removing gloves and before re-applying
 - ✓ After touching shared equipment, touching face, cellphone, or personal items
 - ✓ After sneezing, coughing, or blowing nose

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Use social distancing. Remain 6 feet or more away from others when possible.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow
- Dispose of soiled products immediately after use.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- Ensure high contact surfaces and priority locations are being cleaned and sanitized on a routine basis. Time needs to be allocated for all cleaning, with greater and more frequent emphasize on commonly touched surfaces.
- Cleaning removes dirt and soiled residue while sanitizing kills germs remaining on surfaces. Both are required to effectively disinfect surfaces.
- Employees cleaning should be trained on how to properly clean and sanitize the type of surface they are working on.
- Examples of high priority surfaces:
 - ✓ Restroom/locker room areas
 - ✓ Registers/keypads/remotes
 - ✓ Computer/telephones
 - ✓ Any shared electronic device
 - ✓ Door handles
 - ✓ Floors and walls
 - ✓ Light switches
 - ✓ Shopping and push carts
 - ✓ Tables and chairs
 - ✓ Shared food equipment
 - ✓ Handrails

Cleaning and sanitizing of high contact areas are a priority NOW to prevent the spread of COVID-19 if an area would become affected by an individual with the virus.

- **Restrooms:** All surfaces including toilet seats and handles, door knobs, faucets, paper towels dispensers, floors, mirrors, soap dispenser.
- **Food equipment:** Common shared equipment include scoops, deli slicers, can openers, keypads, thermometers, tables, floors, refrigeration handles, pot and pan handles.
- **Customer and employee common areas:** tables, chairs, shopping carts/baskets, counters, breakrooms
- **First Aid/health and utility areas:** first aid kits, laundry equipment, linens
- **Locker rooms:** disinfect at least daily-lockers, tables, chairs, surfaces
- **Other frequently touched surfaces:** clean and disinfect frequently, at least daily.

FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) and many have food safety plans that include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls. CGMPs and food safety plans have requirements for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#)

Chemicals

- All sanitizers must be EPA approved. There is a list of EPA-registered “disinfectant” products for COVID-19 on the [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list](#) that have qualified under EPA’s [emerging viral pathogen program](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.
- All chemicals being used on food contact surfaces must be approved for food equipment on the label and utilized at the proper concentration per the label instructions.
- Make sure all chemicals containers and spray bottles are labeled.

What to do if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19?

COVID-19 is known to be spread via respiratory droplets and there is currently no evidence that the disease is spread by food. Therefore, foodborne exposure is not considered a route of transmission. Once an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, priority is to prevent further spread to other individuals.

- If not already, send employee home.
- Contact your local health department and follow protocols discussed
- Clean and disinfect affected areas immediately
- Find out who was in contact with the employee while symptomatic and contact them, but maintain confidentiality.
- Sick employees should follow CDC's [What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Employers should consult with local health department for additional guidance.

PA Department of Health advice on returning to work after a diagnosis

- Your local health department will monitor the affected individual during quarantine until their recovery and will be involved clearing the employee to return back to work.
- DOH is recommending that persons with COVID-19, under home isolation be released from isolation after a minimum of 7 days after symptom onset and after 72 hours of feeling well and without a fever.
- People with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had ANY symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.
- After returning to work, employees must maintain good personal hygiene including hand washing procedures and frequencies.

Other employees or household individuals:

People who had close contact* with a person with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days from the date of last contact with the person with COVID-19. Household contacts of persons with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days after their last household exposure. For most, this will be 14 days after the person with COVID-19 is released from isolation.

If someone had close contact* with a COVID-19 case **prior** to the case becoming symptomatic, there was no exposure and no quarantine is necessary.

**Close contact: a) being within 6 feet/close care of an individual with covid-19 for a prolonged period of time or b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)*

For more information:

- [FDA Guidance for Food and Food Handling](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)