



# Best Practices for Food Facilities During COVID-19

Public Health  
Environmental Health Services

The U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is sharing information about best practices to operate retail food stores, restaurants, and associated pick-up and delivery services during the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard workers and consumers.

**For Retail Food Stores, Restaurants and Food Pick-up/Delivery Services**

This addresses key considerations for how foods offered at retail can be safely handled and delivered to the public, as well as key best practices for employee health, cleaning and sanitizing, and personal protective equipment (PPE). This is not a comprehensive list. We encourage consulting the references and links provided below by Center for Disease and Control (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for more detailed information.



## Managing Employee Health (Including Contract Workers)

- Instruct employees with symptoms associated with COVID-19 to report them to their supervisors. Instruct sick employees to stay home and to follow the CDC's [What to do if you are sick with COVID-19](#).
- If employees are sick at work, send them home immediately. [Clean and disinfect](#) surfaces in their workspace. Others at the facility with close contact (i.e., within 6 feet) of the employee during this time should be considered exposed.
- Instruct employees who are well, but know they have been exposed to COVID-19, to notify their supervisor and follow CDC- recommended precautions (see below).
- Inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Implement workplace controls to reduce transmission among employees, such as those described below that are included in [CDC's Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#). This document also provides additional information when employees may have been exposed to COVID-19.

### Employers

- Pre-screen (e.g. take temperature) and assess symptoms prior to starting work.
- Disinfect and clean work spaces, equipment, and high-touch surfaces frequently.

### Employees

- Regularly self-monitor (e.g. take temperature and assess symptoms of coronavirus).
- Wear a masks or face covering.
- Practice social distancing and stay at least 6 feet from other people whenever possible.



- For additional information on employee health and hygiene and recommendations to help prevent worker transmission of foodborne illness, refer to [FDA's Employee Health and Personal Hygiene Handbook](#).
- For returning previously sick employees to work, refer to [CDC's Guidance for Discontinuation of Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19](#).
- Follow [CDC](#) for information on PPE (i.e., gloves, face masks/coverings, and protective gear).
- Frequently [review CDC's Interim Guidance for Business and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#).
- Understand risk at the workplace – use [OSHA's Guidance on Preparing Workplace for COVID-19](#).



## When to Wash your Hands & Personal Hygiene for Employees

It is important for everyone to wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least **20 seconds**. Ensure that there are adequate supplies for hand washing including soap, paper towels and waste receptacles.

[Watch video on proper handwashing.](#)

### Handwashing is required:

- Before starting food preparation
- After touching your face, hair or other areas of the body
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, smoking, eating or drinking
- When switching between raw and ready-to-eat foods
- Before putting gloves on
- After handling money/credit cards/pens/receipts and then handling food
- After engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands

### Additional Recommendations for Hand Hygiene

- Minimize bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food
- Protect food and drinks from contamination when preparing and packaging for delivery and carryout patrons
- Minimize touching your phone or other personal items
- All staff should wash their hands more frequently
- Provide extra garbage cans near restroom exits
- Provide alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for customers and staff to use
- Hand sanitizer is recommended and should be used after washing hands
- If working a cash register, employees should wash hands or use hand sanitizer between customers



In an effort to protect the public from further spread of COVID-19, the County Health Officer has formally ordered everyone in San Bernardino County to wear a face covering when leaving home.



## Managing Operations in a Food Service Facility or Retail Food Store

Continue to follow established food safety protocols and best practices for retail food establishments and important COVID-19 recommendations, including the following:

- **Disinfecting:** Chlorine (bleach)-based sanitizer over 1,000 ppm (sodium hypochlorite) can be used for hard surfaces. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allow proper ventilation during and after application. Use the [CDC, Clean and Disinfect](#).
  - Prepare solution by mixing 1/3 cup of bleach per on gallon of water or 4 teaspoons of bleach per one quart of water.



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces dishware, utensils, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment.
- Frequently disinfect surfaces repeatedly touched by employees or customers such as door knobs, equipment handles, check-out counters, scanners, bagging areas, grocery cart handles etc.
- Frequently clean and disinfect floors, counters, and other facility access areas using [EPA-registered disinfectants](#).
- Follow the 4 key steps to food safety: [Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill](#).
- When changing your normal food preparation procedures, service, delivery functions, or making staffing changes, apply procedures that ensure:
  - ✓ Cooked foods reach the proper internal temperatures prior to service or cooling
  - ✓ Hot foods are cooled rapidly for later use – check temperatures of foods being cooled in refrigerators or by rapid cooling techniques such as ice baths and cooling wands
  - ✓ Minimize the time food is held in the danger zone (between 41°F and 135°F) when stored, displayed, or delivered
  - ✓ Proper training for food employees with new or altered duties and that they apply the training according to established procedures

### **Help employees and customers maintain good infection control and social distancing by:**

- Discontinuing operations, such as salad bars, buffets, and beverage service station that require customers to use common utensils or dispensers.
- Limiting the number of customers in the store at one time.
- Finding ways to encourage spacing between customers while in line for service or check out in accordance with applicable State or local requirements.
- Staggering employees' breaks and lunch times and spreading out breakroom chairs.
- Limiting crew size by staggering or increasing the number of work shifts.
- Discouraging customers from bringing pets – except service animals – into stores or waiting areas.
- When customers bring their own bags, employees should be instructed to not touch or place groceries in customer-brought bags. Ask customers to leave their own bags in the shopping cart and to bag their own groceries. For more guidance for grocery stores, check out OSHA's [COVID-19 Infection and Prevention in Grocery Stores](#).

- Continue to use sanitizers and disinfectants for their designed purposes.
- Verify that your ware-washing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
- Remember that hot water can be used in place of chemicals to sanitize equipment and utensils in manual ware-washing machines.
- If you donate food to food recovery or charitable organizations, check for State and local guidelines, refer to [COVID-19 Guidelines for Community Food Service Providers](#). You can also find further information at [Conference for Food Protection](#).





## Managing Food Pick-Up and Delivery

- Continue to use sanitizers and disinfectants for their designed purposes.
- Observe established food safety practices for time/temperature control, preventing cross contamination, cleaning hands, no sick workers, and storage of food, etc.
- Have employees wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing, or after touching high-touch surfaces, e.g., doorknobs and doorbells.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. See, CDC's [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#).
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces such as counter tops and touch pads and within the vehicle, by wiping down surfaces by using a disinfecting solution, mentioned in the disinfection guidelines of this handout.
  - Make sure to read the label and follow the manufacturer's instruction on use.
- Establish designated pick-up zones for customers to help maintain social distancing.
- Practice social distancing when delivering food, e.g., offering "no-touch" deliveries and sending text alerts or calling when deliveries have arrived.
- Conduct an evaluation of your facility to identify and apply operational changes in order to maintain social distancing if offering take-out/carry-out option by maintaining a 6-foot distance from others, when possible.
- Keep hot and cold foods at their proper temperature by storing in an appropriate transport vessel.
  - Keep cold foods cold by keeping enough coolant materials, e.g., gel packs.
  - Keep hot foods hot by ensuring insulated cases are properly functioning.
- Keep foods separated to avoid cross contamination, e.g., keeping raw foods separated from cooked and ready-to-eat foods.
- Ensure that any wrapping and packaging used for food transport is done so that contamination of the food is prevented.
- Routinely clean and sanitize coolers and insulated bags used to deliver foods.



## For More Information

**For questions specific to food service operations:**

**Call or text 800-442-2283  
or visit**

**[wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/ehs](http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/ehs)**

**For questions specific to COVID-19:**

**Email:**

**[coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:coronavirus@dph.sbcounty.gov)**

**Call: (909) 387-3911**

**(Monday - Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.)**

**or visit:**

**[sbccovid19.com](http://sbccovid19.com)**

**References:**

- California Department of Public Health: [CDPH.ca.gov/COVID19](http://CDPH.ca.gov/COVID19)
- California Department of Public Health: [California Retail Food Code](#)
- Centers for Disease and Control: [CDC.gov/coronavirus](http://CDC.gov/coronavirus)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration: [FDA.gov/COVID-19](http://FDA.gov/COVID-19)

**For concerns regarding Emotional Support and Well-being [click here.](#)**

Adopted from U.S. Food and Drug Administration [www.FDA.gov](http://www.FDA.gov)



**385 N. Arrowhead Ave., San Bernardino  
Call or Text: 800.442.2283**

**[wp.sbcounty.gov/dph](http://wp.sbcounty.gov/dph)**