

COVID-19 Food Establishments Guidelines

As restaurants begin to re-open dining rooms, there are many important guidelines that facilities need to think about. These guidelines should be followed along with all other state and city regulations for food establishments.

Employee Health Policy Training

Employees must perform a daily symptom assessment.

- Daily symptom assessments should include taking your temperature with a thermometer and monitoring for fever. Also watch for coughing or trouble breathing.

Face coverings are required for employees and distributors while working.

- **Exceptions:**
 - Healthcare professional states it is not advisable.
 - It is against documented industry best practices.
 - They are not permitted by federal or state laws/ regulations.
 - Employee is working alone in a designated area.

If an employee or an employer believes they qualify for this exemption they must be able to provide a written justification at all times.

Review the facilities employee health policy and make sure that it meets the State of Ohio requirements for illness exclusion and reporting. This is a good time to retrain **all** staff on employee health procedures. Have all employees review policy and sign off to show they understand and agree to follow the policy. Monitor staff for COVID-19 symptoms including fever before they start their shift every day by taking temperatures or having employees self-report to the person in charge that they have no symptoms.

For instructions on how to wear a face mask click [here](#).

What to Do If an Employee Tests Positive for COVID-19 or Is Experiencing Symptoms of COVID-19

- **Employees are required to stay home if sick.**
- **Employee should be sent home immediately if at the facility with symptoms.**
- **All surfaces that the infected person may have come in contact with will need to be cleaned and disinfected immediately.**
- **Manager shall notify the Local Health Department (Columbus Public Health: 614-645-1474, option 2).**
- All employees that were within 6 feet of the person for a prolonged time (10 minutes or more) during their shift must start monitoring their symptoms for the next 14 days.
- Exposed employees need to be monitoring their temperatures multiple times a day.
- Exposed employees need to wear an employer-approved mask on their face for the next 14 days while in the facility and they need to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other employees during their shifts.
- Sick employee must stay home until they are fever-free for 72 hours without use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved, and until it is at least seven days from the first day of the symptoms.

Handwashing is Key

Wash hands frequently; for 20 seconds with soap and warm water:

- When first entering the kitchen area.
- Immediately before preparing food or working with non-prepackaged food or clean equipment and utensils, including take out containers or utensils.
- After using the bathroom.
- After handling dirty equipment or utensils.
- After coughing, sneezing, blowing nose, smoking, eating or drinking.
- After touching money, credit cards or ink pens when possible. If working a register you can wear gloves.
- Before putting on disposable gloves to start working with food.

- After changing diapers.

Hand Drying

- Have paper towels available in restrooms for drying hands instead of hand dryers.

Glove Usage

Gloves need to be treated just like your hands. Make sure all kitchen staff are following procedures on when gloves need to be changed. Gloves will become contaminated if they touch an employee's face, arms, body or clothes. When this occurs, gloves must be removed and hands washed immediately.

Personal Hygiene

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your arm or inner elbow, NOT your hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Wash hands before and after eating food, and only eat in designated break areas.

Educate Employees and Customers on the Importance of Self-distancing

- **Ensure employees maintain 6 foot distance between themselves at all times.**
- **Frequently clean high touch surfaces such as registers and counters.**
- **Stagger start times of employees.**
- **Establish a maximum capacity (e.g. 50% of the fire code).**
- **Ask customers not to enter if symptomatic.**
- **Provide hand sanitizer at entrances and exits and registers.**
- **Discontinue use of salad bars and self-service buffets.**
- **Do not have self-serve sauces or silverware.**
- **Do not allow customers to use self-serve soda machines. Use the soda machine in the kitchen to fill drinks up for customers.**
- **Place signs and floor markings for customers to encourage social distancing, including indoor and outdoor waiting areas.**
- **You can limit the number of people in a store or restaurant by using last names to assign shopping days.**
- **Put up plexiglass to separate cashiers from customers.**
- **Post hours of operation online and conduct as much business as possible online.**
- **Ensure that only minimum required operations are being performed.**
- Strongly encourage the use of face coverings by customers and guests.
- Avoid using displays that will promote customers to gather.
- If free refills are offered, do not use the same cup to refill. Instead offer them a new cup.
- Use disposable menus or a chalkboard for your menu.
- Set up designated pickup areas.
- Space out tables and chairs in the dining room that are being used so that there is 6 feet of distance between customers.
- Train employees on how to properly put on, wear and take off masks.
- Encourage the use of debit cards and contactless pay through smart phones.
- Hold team meetings through teleconference rather than in person.
- If people have to sign for receipts, ask them to bring their own pen or offer one time-use pens they can keep.
- Maximize self-checkout. Include wipes/disinfectant spray next to each station and have employees wipe down stations after use.

Vulnerable Populations

- **Offer special hours for vulnerable populations.**
- Ensure you have a plan in place to allow employees who are high risk to work safely.
- Offer remote work options for employees that are high risk, if possible.

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- If remote work is not possible, place high-risk employees in positions with minimal customer interaction.

Effective Disinfectants

Chlorine Bleach:

- Add 1/3 cup of bleach to 1 gallon of water. Mix and use the chlorine solution promptly. Allow one minute of contact time and then rinse with water.
- Use for stainless steel, items that come in contact with the mouth and food, tile floors, nonporous surfaces, counters, sinks and toilets.

Other Disinfectants:

- To determine if a product is effective against COVID-19, please refer to the registered EPA website: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf
- Make sure to read the product label and choose a product that is approved for the type of surface you want to use it on.

Proper Cleaning and Disinfecting

- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces often, including:
 - Bathroom surfaces
 - Light switches
 - Kitchen surfaces
 - Phones
 - Tables and chairs
 - Doorknobs
 - Computer keyboards
 - Railings
 - Remote controls
 - Menus
 - High chairs
 - Condiment bottles
- Employees should not share headsets for drive-thru and headsets should be disinfected after employee is done wearing it.
- All food contact surfaces shall be clean and sanitized before using.
- Verify that the dish machine is working correctly. Everyday employees need to test it – don't rely on the machines temperature gauges or service providers.
- **Best Practice:** Provide disinfecting wipes for customers to clean carts/baskets or provide staff to clean all carts frequently.
- Return scanned groceries to same cart – don't transfer to cart emptied by previous customer.

Managing Food Pick-up and Delivery

- If offering delivery, routinely clean and sanitize transport containers, and maintain proper temperatures during transport.
- Practice social distancing when delivery food (e.g., offering “no-touch” deliveries and sending text alerts when delivery arrives).
- Establish designated pick-up areas inside the establishment, or promote curbside pick-up to promote social distancing.
- Ensure that no more than 10 people are waiting in line at time and that they are 6 feet apart

Water Management Plan for Your Facility

- Please see our [Guidance for Building Water Systems](#) document on how to ensure the safety of your building water systems and devices after a prolonged shutdown.

****Bold text** denotes mandates by the state of Ohio.*

Information contained in these guidelines were pulled from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>. Guidelines are subject to change as the state and federal information changes.