COLORADO
Division of Environmental Health & Sustainability
Department of Public Health & Environment

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Retail Food Establishment COVID-19 Guidance

Important Role of Retail Food Establishments in COVID-19 Response

Retail Food Establishments can be impacted by COVID-19 and can play a role in the response:

- Staff may be infected with COVID-19 and transmit illness to other staff and patrons; risk is higher for other staff members because of close, prolonged contact.
- Congregate settings and group gatherings have been shown to promote transmission of COVID-19.
- By following the action items below, Retail Food Establishments can help control the spread of illness among staff and patrons.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name of the respiratory illness associated with the novel coronavirus that is circulating throughout the United States. The name of this new virus is SARS-CoV-2. SARS-CoV-2 is a coronavirus. Coronaviruses are common, in fact the "common cold" is caused by a coronavirus.

Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Incubation period

The time between catching the illness and the first symptoms showing up ranges between 2 and 14 days.

How COVID-19 is Spread

The virus is thought to spread:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) for 10 minutes or longer.
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Foodborne or fecal-oral transmission is not thought to contribute to disease spread.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. They may also land on hard surfaces that people touch with their hands and then touch their faces (scratch their noses, rub their eyes, wipe their mouths).

At this time, it is unclear how long a person is infectious (can spread) COVID-19, but ill people are likely most contagious when they have symptoms.

Who is at Risk?

Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older people (over age 60), especially those over 80 years.
- People who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, or diabetes.
- Older people with chronic medical conditions are at greatest risk.

Treatment

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19 and there is no vaccine to prevent illness. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

Retail Food Establishment Action Items

The best practices for retail food establishments are **continuous and diligent implementation of the elements of the food code that help prevent illness**. Additional steps you can take include special attention to the following in your daily operations:

- Heightened hygienic practices including peer observation (watch and coach teammates) and supervisor oversight (attention to techniques and frequency) to ensure staff are washing hands frequently and correctly.
- Use signage to notify visitors, vendors: Place signage at the main entrances warning visitors *not* to enter if they are sick or not feeling well, have recently traveled outside of the US, or may have come into contact with someone with COVID-19. Here is an example of signage that you can adapt at your facility. https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/COVID-19-CoronavirusAnnouncementforVisitors.pdf and https://paltc.org/sites/default/files/Attention%20Visitors%20All%20facilities.pdf
- Constant interaction (before each shift) with staff on their health status and the health of anyone with whom they may be in close contact (family members, roommates, etc.).
- Immediately exclude any staff members indicating symptoms or that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone diagnosed COVID-19 and contact your local public health agency and CDPHE immediately.
- During routine business hours, frequently and thoroughly clean and disinfect all frequently touched objects within the dining and customer areas (door knobs, cabinet handles, handrails, light switches, kitchen counters, dining room tables). Regular cleaning and disinfection products can be used. For an additional list of recommended disinfection products visit: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2\
- Deep clean and disinfect the entire facility during non-operational hours at least 2 times per week. Regular cleaning and disinfection products can be used. For an additional list of recommended disinfection products visit: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2\
- Staff should wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after cleaning and disinfecting is completed. Ensure that staff properly wash their hands immediately after gloves are removed.

- Continue to clean and sanitize food preparation surfaces in the kitchen and other food storage areas.
- Have staff dispense food from buffets or discontinue buffet services to prevent customer reuse of service utensils.
- Discontinue services that allow customers to fill their own beverage cups such as coffee cups or growlers.
- Guide staff to cough or sneeze into their sleeved arm or cover their nose and mouth with a tissue. Throw away the tissue after they use it and wash hands.
- Ensure staff do NOT share cups and eating utensils with others.
- Ensure that staff avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Station hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer in common assembly areas, such as waiting areas, game rooms, or lobbies. If available consider putting a bottle of hand sanitizer on all the dining room tables. At your main entrance, provide a cleaning station with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and a trashcan for visitors.

For further information please see the CDC guidance under the "How to clean and disinfect" section at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html

Retail Food Establishment Administrative Considerations

Retail food establishments must also consider:

1. Retail food establishments that serve highly susceptible populations such as nursing homes, long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and hospitals should be aware that there are heightened concerns for people residing in these settings. Please check the CDPHE website for guidance about highly susceptible populations.

2. Work closely with your local public health department as concerns arise or you are seeking additional guidance.
3. Communicate about COVID-19 with your staff and partners. Share information about what is currently known about COVID-19, the potential for surge, your organization's preparedness plans, and any potential impacts on your organization's operations and workflow. Transparency regarding organizational actions and the most reliable up-to-date information regarding COVID-19 can decrease stress and fear among your employees.
4. Monitor your staff. Workers can inadvertently spread viruses. A young healthy person with sniffles and scratchy throat may feel a little off, but without a fever, may feel okay to go to work. Exclude employees that are experiencing symptoms
5. When to close. Closing your business can be a difficult decision. It will be important to work closely with your Local Public Health Department as you begin considering closing work. You may want to close when there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 among your workforce. You should close as absenteeism reaches 5%-10% or when directed by your Local Public Health Department.
6. When to reopen: You should consult with your Local Public Health Department as you consider reopening your business.