



MANDATORY DIRECTIVE:



Food Facilities

Effective July 13, 2020

sccgov.org/coronavirus



MANDATORY DIRECTIVE FOR FOOD FACILITIES

Please confirm that your facility may open under the State Order. Where there is a difference between the local County Order and the State Order, the more restrictive order must be followed. The State also has specific guidance for certain facilities that must be followed in addition to this mandatory directive.

Information on the State's Order and State guidance is available at covid19.ca.gov.

Issued: July 14, 2020
Updated: September 8, 2020

On August 28, 2020, the State released its Blueprint for a Safer Economy ("Blueprint"), a statewide system of COVID-19 restrictions. Santa Clara County is currently in Tier Two (Red) of the Blueprint.

Under the Blueprint, the State Health Officer has ordered that bars, brewpubs, breweries, and pubs must close all operations (both indoor and outdoor) unless they are offering sit-down, outdoor dine-in meals and selling alcohol only in the same transaction as a meal. See the Statewide Public Health Officer's Order [here](#) and the State's Blueprint [here](#). These businesses may not operate except in accordance with the Statewide Public Health Officer Order's and the State's Blueprint.

Additionally, under the Blueprint, grocery stores must limit capacity to 50%. Accordingly, grocery stores must limit capacity to 50% of normal or to the capacity allowed by the County's Risk Reduction Order, whichever is stricter.

Food facilities include grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops, bakeries, food trucks, catering businesses, convenience stores, and other facilities that store, package, prepare, serve, and sell food with a valid permit from the Department of Environmental Health. While these businesses are an essential link in society's food supply chain, they can also pose significant risks to public health in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because they involve food-handling and can also involve significant interaction between members of different households and between staff and

the public, food facilities must take extra precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for their customers and staff.

This Directive explains how food facilities may operate. **This Directive is mandatory, and failure to follow it is a violation of the Health Officer’s Order issued July 2, 2020** (“Order”). You must comply with the Order and all requirements of this Directive. In addition, food facilities that operate for outdoor dining or as wineries or tasting rooms must comply with the Health Officer’s Directive for Outdoor Dining, Wineries, and Outdoor Tasting Rooms.

The Order Issued July 2

The Order imposes several restrictions on all businesses and activities to ensure that the County stays as safe as possible, including but not limited to the following:

- **The Social Distancing Protocol:** All businesses must fill out and submit the newest version of the Social Distancing Protocol to the County using the online form, available [here](#). The Protocol is submitted under penalty of perjury, meaning that everything written on the form must be truthful and accurate to the best of the signer’s knowledge, and submitting false information is a crime. The Protocol must be distributed to all workers, and it must be accessible to all officials who are enforcing the Order. Businesses are responsible for ensuring that workers understand and are trained on Protocol requirements in a language that they understand.
- **Signage:** All businesses must print (1) an updated COVID-19 PREPARED Sign and (2) a Social Distancing Protocol Visitor Information Sheet, and both must be posted prominently at all facility entrances. These are available for printing after submission of the Social Distancing Protocol online.
- **Face Coverings:** Everyone at a business facility or worksite must wear a face covering at all times (except very young children, people for whom face coverings are medically inadvisable, or for communication by or with people who are hearing impaired).
- **Density Limitation:** All businesses must limit the number of people who may be at the facility at the same time. For staff members, the limit is 1 person per 250 gross square feet of indoor facility space (this means total space, including areas open only to staff like storage rooms). For clients, the limit is 1 person per 150 square feet of indoor space open to the public. The density requirements tell businesses how many people (staff or clients) they can let into their facility before another person leaves. Children under 12 who are accompanying a parent or guardian do not count against the limit, but everyone age 12 and over does. **This Directive describes a limited exception to the density limitation applicable only to food facilities.**

See the [Order](#) and the [FAQ page](#) for more details.

In addition to these general requirements applicable to all businesses under the Order, food facilities must comply with the following directives.

Measures to Enforce Social Distancing

1. Ensure 6 Feet of Social Distance

Food facilities must ensure that everyone in their facility maintains at least 6 feet of social distance from everyone outside their household at all times, except to the limited extent necessary to accomplish a specific job function or transaction. To help accomplish this distancing, food facilities must:

- a. Place tape or other markings on the ground where lines form to show customers where to stand to maintain at least 6 feet of social distance at all times (such as when waiting to access a check-out station or to enter the facility).
- b. Separate the areas where an order can be placed from the delivery/pick-up areas to prevent crowding.
- c. Post signage reminding customers to stay at least 6 feet away from everyone outside their household.
- d. Stagger stocking schedules to reduce need for staff members to occupy the same aisle at the same time.
- e. If feasible, equip the cash registers and other areas with high levels of customer-staff interaction with plexiglass or other impermeable barriers.

2. Customer Density

Limit the number of customers inside the facility at any time to 1 customer per 150 square feet of indoor space accessible to the public. Children under 12 who are accompanying a parent or guardian do not count against the limit, but everyone age 12 and over does.

3. Staff Density

Limit the number of staff inside the facility at any time to 1 staff member per 250 gross square feet of the facility, except that facilities with 1,000 square feet of space or less may have up to 4 staff members inside at any time.

- For example, a 700 square foot food facility may have up to 4 staff members inside at any time. If 300 square feet of space is accessible to the public, 2 customers may also be inside the facility at any time.

4. *Monitor Occupancy Restrictions*

Designate a staff member to ensure that the maximum number of customers and workers allowed inside the facility at any one time is not exceeded, and that everyone complies with the face covering requirements and other provisions of this Directive and the facility's Social Distancing Protocol. Facilities with a large number of customers, like grocery stores, should physically post a staff member at the entrance to control the number of customers entering the store.

Handwashing and Hand Hygiene Measures

Food facilities must take the following steps to ensure proper handwashing and hand hygiene practices among staff members:

5. *Handwashing Supplies*

Provide adequate soap and water, hand sanitizer, and/or disinfectant at or near the facility entrance and at other appropriate locations for use by the public and staff, including at locations where there is frequent interaction between staff and the public (like at the cash register).

6. *Staff Requirements*

- a. Require staff to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as often as necessary to prevent contamination of food and food contact surfaces, including:
 - i. When entering the kitchen.
 - ii. Before starting food preparation.
 - iii. After touching their face, hair, or other areas of the body.
 - iv. After using the restroom.
 - v. After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, smoking, or drinking.
 - vi. Before and after eating.
 - vii. When handling raw food then ready-to-eat food.
 - viii. After cleaning, bussing tables, or touching any items customers have used.
 - ix. Before putting on gloves. For information on glove use, visit https://www.sccgov.org/sites/deh/Pages/scc_deh_covid19_info.aspx.

- x. Between handling food and handling money, credit cards, phones, pens, or other high-touch items.
- xi. After engaging in other activities that may contaminate the hands.
- b. Allow employees to wash their hands every 30 minutes and additionally as needed. (Executive Order N-51-20)
- c. Assign staff to conduct regular checks – at least once every hour – to make sure that soap and paper towels at handwash stations are properly stocked.
- d. Provide extra garbage cans near restroom exits.
- e. Instruct personnel to:
 - i. Avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food.
 - ii. Protect food and drinks from contamination when preparing and packing for delivery and carryout by customers.
 - iii. Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - iv. Minimize touching their phones or other personal items.
 - v. Wash hands more frequently than normal.

Sanitizing Equipment and the Facility

Food facilities must implement the following sanitization measures to minimize the risk of transmission inside the facility:

7. High-Touch Areas and Surfaces

- a. Regularly disinfect all high-touch areas and surfaces (such as doorknobs, handles, rails, light switches, sanitizing stations, restrooms, sinks, toilets, food counters, food preparation areas and equipment, cash registers, conveyor belts to the register, shopping carts and baskets, and self-check out areas), following [CDC guidelines](#) and the following measures:
 - i. Prepare a Chlorine-based (bleach) sanitizer at 100 ppm or quaternary ammonium-based sanitizers at 200 ppm to effectively sanitize surfaces. Use test strips to ensure that sanitizer is prepared at the proper concentrations. Sanitizer shall be changed frequently when the solution becomes cloudy, dirty or does not meet the required concentration.

- ii. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. The CDC has provided a list of effective disinfectants [here](#).
- b. Provide disinfecting wipes that are effective against COVID-19 near shopping carts and baskets for customers.
- c. If necessary, modify operating hours to ensure that regular and thorough sanitization can be accomplished.
- d. Provide washing and toilet facilities that have an adequate supply of cleansing agents, water, and single-use towels or hand dryers.

Prevent Unnecessary Contact

Food facilities must take the following steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

8. *Prohibit product sampling.*

Product sampling is prohibited.

9. *Customers' Use of Items from Home, Self-Serve Areas, and Other Supplies*

- a. Implement measures to prevent contact between staff and items that customers bring from home (such as reusable bags, cups, mugs, and food containers) or prohibit use of reusable items as appropriate to your operation. For example, require customers using reusable bags to bag their own groceries at point of sale, or require customers using reusable cups or mugs to place them on stable surface for beverage pouring by staff.
- b. Do not allow customers to access any self-service areas, including beverage stations, bulk-item food bins, coffee grinding stations, and food bars. Staff may be stationed at the self-service areas to assist customers by performing the services – such as grinding coffee, filling beverage cups, dispensing unpackaged food items, or adding condiments into products (like cream into coffee) – then handing the prepared items off to the customers.
- c. Lids for cups, condiments, utensils, and napkins must be given to customers upon request.

Other Steps Recommended by the Health Officer

The following steps are not required, but they are **strongly recommended** by the Health Officer:

- a. Offering designated hours for customers at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including people 50+, people with underlying health conditions or weakened immune systems, and pregnant women.
- b. Providing a single, clearly designated entrance and separate exit to help maintain social distancing where possible.
- c. Increasing remote (online and telephone) purchasing, delivery, and curbside pickup service options to reduce the number of customers entering the facility or waiting in line.
- d. Staggering staff break schedules, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to reduce the number of workers taking breaks together.
- e. Install physical barriers (for example, a plastic or plexiglass partition) between customers and staff where transaction and close exchanges occur, such as at checkout stations.

Sick Leave Requirements

Effective April 16, 2020, California Executive Order N-51-20 requires that all employers with 500 or more workers who are engaged in the food supply chain are required to provide up to 80 hours of sick leave for full-time workers (as well as leave calculated on prior hours for those who work less than full-time). This includes grocery workers, restaurant or fast food workers, workers at warehouses where food is stored, and workers who pick-up or deliver any food items. Workers can access sick leave if they are (1) subject to a quarantine or isolation order, (2) advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine or self-isolate due to concerns related to COVID-19, or (3) prohibited by their hiring entity to work because of concerns related to the transmission of COVID-19.

Employers not subject to this law are strongly encouraged to expand access to emergency sick leave for their workers to protect workers and their families from the spread of COVID-19.

Stay Informed

For answers to frequently asked questions about this industry and other topics, please see the [FAQ page](#). **Please note that this Directive may be updated.** For up-to-date information on the Health Officer Order, visit the County Public Health Department's website at www.sccgov.org/coronavirus.

For COVID-19 information from the Department of Environmental Health, visit www.EHinfo.org/coronavirus and provide your email address to receive updates operations electronically. Please send specific questions related to food service operations to dehweb@cep.sccgov.org.

Additional Resources

For additional information and resources for food facility operations please see:

- [Food Safety Guidelines During Transport/Delivery](#) (Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health)
- [What Grocery and Food Retail Workers Need to Know about COVID-19](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)