



COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Measures for Food Facilities Updated April 6, 2020

Background COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus. It is primarily spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces. Symptoms include fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath. COVID-19 is circulating in the community at increasing rates in Santa Clara County, surrounding areas, and around the country.

Legal Order On March 31, 2020, the Santa Clara County Health Officer issued a mandatory legal order (“Order”) extending shelter in place requirements until 11:59 pm on May 3, 2020. The Order directs all individuals living in the County to continue sheltering at their place of residence except to do essential work or activities or meet essential needs. The Order tightens restrictions on businesses and other activities set forth in the County’s March 16, 2020 shelter in place order.

To ensure access to food, personal hygienic products, and important household consumer products, the Order permits the continued operation of:

- Grocery stores, certified farmers’ markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and similar retail establishments selling significant amounts of food as well as certain hygienic products and/or household consumer products.
- Restaurants and other establishments that prepare and serve food to the public but *only* on a delivery or carryout basis. Dining at the premises is prohibited.
- Charitable feeding operations but only on a delivery or take-away basis. Dining at the premises is prohibited.

To meet the public’s nutritional needs, food facilities are encouraged to continue operating subject to these and the following restrictions and recommendations.

Consult the Order and visit the Santa Clara County Public Health Department website for answers to Frequently Asked Questions and up to date guidance documents: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/novel-coronavirus/Pages/public-health-orders.aspx>

**Social
Distancing
Protocol**

To continue operating, all essential businesses must complete and implement a Social Distancing Protocol for each of their facilities in the County frequented by the public or employees. The protocol must be based on the form provided in Appendix A to the Order: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/deh/Documents/Social-Distancing-Protocol.pdf>. Post a copy at or near each public entrance of your facility and provide a copy to all employees.

Appendix A is available in English, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese. It should be posted in English and any other language spoken by a significant portion of your employees and/or customer base.

The Protocol must explain how your business will achieve certain social distancing, employee and customer health, and hygiene and sanitation measures. These measures and others specifically applicable to food facilities are set forth below.

**Public
Signage**

Post signage at each public entrance of the facility to inform all employees and customers to:

- Avoid entering the facility if they have a cough or fever
- Maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another
- Sneeze and cough into a cloth or tissue or, if not available, into one's elbow, and
- Avoid shaking hands or engaging in any unnecessary physical contact

**Maintain
Adequate
Social
Distancing**

Ensure that customers maintain adequate social distancing (at least six feet between one another) at all times, including when standing in line by:

- Limiting the number of people who can enter your facility at any time to ensure that people can easily maintain social distance at all times.
- Place tape or other markings on the ground where lines form to show customers where to stand to maintain at least six feet social distance.
- Separate order areas from delivery/pick-up areas to prevent customers from gathering.

**Prevention –
Handwashing**

Provide adequate soap and water, hand sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher), and/or disinfectant at or near the facility entrance and at other appropriate locations for use by the public and employees, including at locations where there is frequent interaction between employees and the public (like at the cash register).

Employees must **wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**

Employees' hands should be washed:

- When entering the kitchen
- Before starting food preparation
- After touching their face, hair, or other areas of the body
- After using the restroom

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- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, smoking, eating, or drinking
 - When handling raw food then ready-to-eat food
 - After cleaning, bussing tables, or touching any items that customers have used
 - Before putting on gloves
 - Information on glove use may be found at this link:
<https://direc.to/dw39>
 - Between handling food and handling money, credit cards, phones, pens or other high-touch items
 - After engaging in other activities that may contaminate the hands

Tips!

- *Avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food*
- *Assign an employee to keep soap and paper towels stocked at handwash stations at least every hour*
- *Protect food and drinks from contamination when preparing and packing for delivery and carryout by customers*
- *Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth*
- *Minimize touching your phone or other personal items*
- *All staff must wash hands more frequently than normal*
- *Provide extra garbage cans near restrooms exits*

Provide regular staff training to ensure proper protocols are followed!

**Prevention –
Sanitizing
Equipment
and the
Facility**

Regularly disinfect all high-touch surfaces exposed to customers or employees routinely throughout the day.

Chlorine-based (bleach) sanitizer at 100 ppm or quaternary ammonium-based sanitizers at 200 ppm are effective sanitizers. Use test strips to ensure that sanitizer is at these required concentrations. Change sanitizer when the solution becomes cloudy or dirty or does not meet the required concentration.

Reduce physical contact by providing for contactless payment systems. If it is not feasible to do so, disinfect all payment portals, pens, and styluses *after each use*.

Tips!

➤ *COVID-19 can last for days on surfaces. Assign designated staff to continuously clean and sanitize all high-touch areas. In addition to customer payment systems, these include:*

- *Door knobs, faucet handles, and cabinet/drawer pulls*
- *Cash registers*
- *Shopping carts and shopping baskets*

Prevent Unnecessary Contact

Implement measures to prevent unnecessary physical contact:

- Disallow self-service by customers, including from bulk-item foods bins and food bars. Have employees provide customers with all beverages and unpackaged food items
- Have employees place additions into products (like cream into coffee), rather than allowing customers to do so
- Prohibit product sampling
- Do not permit customers to bring their own bags, mugs, food containers, or other reusable items from home
- Staff should provide lids for cups, condiments, utensils, and napkins to customers upon request
- Do not shake hands

Tips!

- ☞ *You may choose to offer certain store hours that will only be available to customers at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to minimize their risk of exposure. People who are at high risk for severe illness include people **50** or older, people with underlying health conditions or weakened immune systems, and people who are pregnant.*
- ☞ *Require your employees to wear face coverings at all times during their workday. Face coverings *should not be* surgical or medical masks, which are in short supply and urgently needed by healthcare workers. Instead, face coverings such as bandanas, scarfs, or home-sewn fabric coverings should be used. *Note that wearing a cloth face covering does not eliminate the need to follow social distancing and hygiene measures, including physically distancing yourself from others and frequently washing your hands.**

Employee Health

Essential businesses must monitor employee health.

- Screen your employees at the beginning of each shift for symptoms of illness.
 - Ask if they are experiencing any of the following: fever, tiredness, cough, muscle or body aches, shortness of breath nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, night sweats, sore throat, headaches, confusion, or loss of sense of taste or smell.
 - If an employee shows any of these symptoms, send them home and instruct them to follow the instructions on the County's COVID-19 Learn What to Do – If You Think You are Sick webpage: <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/novel-coronavirus/Pages/learn-what-to-do.aspx#sick>
Employees who are living with someone who has tested positive should also follow applicable instructions on this webpage.
- If an employee tests positive with COVID-19 and was working while showing symptoms, the following steps shall be taken:
 - Immediately cease operation, close facility, and thoroughly sanitize it.

Instructions for sanitizing your facility may be found at this link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

Your facility can reopen as soon as it has been sanitized.

- Instruct the employee to follow the instructions on the County's COVID-19 Learn What to Do – If You Think You are Sick webpage. Information may be found at the link provided above.
- Inform other employees that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and the day(s) on which the potential exposure occurred. If you take this step, you should also instruct your employees to closely monitor themselves for any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, coughing, and/or shortness of breath) for 14 days.
- If you have employees who are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, consider temporarily re-assigning them to non-public-contact duties.
- You are encouraged to implement a sick pay policy to provide compensation for employees who must stay home due to COVID-19 or to quarantine. These measures will reduce the chance that employees who need to work to support their families will try to return to work earlier than the quarantine or self-isolation period.

Additional information

The information and requirements pertaining to COVID-19 may change as more is learned about this virus and its transmission. Up to date legal orders as well answers to Frequently Asked Questions, status reports, and other helpful information can be found on the Santa Clara County Public Health website:

<http://sccphd.org/coronavirus>

Please send specific questions related to food service operations to dehweb@cep.sccgov.org. For additional updates, follow us on Facebook at @cepascc and @sccpublichealth.

Other Resources:

- If your operation provides food deliveries, follow the Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health's Food Safety Guidelines During Transport/Delivery in addition to the measures in this document, available at: <https://direc.to/dw3y>
- For COVID-19 information from the California Department of Public Health visit: www.cdph.ca.gov/covid19
- For COVID-19 information from the CDC visit: www.cdc.gov/covid19