



COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Measures for Food Facilities

Updated May 26, 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 in Santa Clara County, surrounding areas, and around the country.

Legal Order Shelter in Place restrictions remain in effect in Santa Clara County. Visit the County Public Health Department's website to view the current mandatory legal orders by the County Health Officer and answers to frequently asked questions: <http://sccphd.org/coronavirus>

Social Distancing Protocol All businesses that are allowed to operate under the Order **must** complete and implement a **revised Social Distancing Protocol (Protocol)** for each of their facilities visited by the public or personnel, even if they previously had one. The revised Protocol template is Appendix A to the County Health Officer's May 22, 2020 Order and available on the County Public Health Department website in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

The Protocol must explain how your business will achieve certain social distancing, training, worker and customer health, and hygiene and sanitation measures. Include other applicable risk mitigation measures from this guidance document as "additional health and safety measures" for the facility.

Each business must:

1. Distribute a copy of its Protocol to all personnel working at the facility (in English and any other language spoken by a significant portion of workers).
2. Print and post in a prominent place near entrances to the facility the following:
 - a. **COVID-19 PREPARED Sign**
 - b. **Social Distancing Protocol Visitor Information Sheet**

These documents can be found in Appendix A to the Order and are available on the [County Public Health website](#). They should be posted in English and any other language spoken by a significant portion of your personnel and/or customer base.

Public Signage In addition to the COVID-19 PREPARED Sign and the Social Distancing Protocol Visitor Information Sheet, signage shall be posted at each public entrance of the facility to inform all personnel and customers of the following:

- Do not enter the facility if you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Maintain a minimum six-foot distance from others, including waiting in line
- Sneeze and cough into a cloth, tissue or, if not available, into your elbow.
- Face coverings are required to be worn before entering (except if 6 years of age or

younger or medically inadvisable).

- Do not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact.

Post signage at appropriate locations throughout the facility reminding customers to maintain social distance. Sign templates are available on the [County Public Health website](#).

A sign shall be posted at each public entrance of the facility to inform customers about customer restrictions and/or requirements specific to your facility (for example: customers are allowed to use their own reusable bags if they bag their own groceries).

Face Coverings

Face coverings (or other respiratory protection as required by Cal/OSHA for certain activities) must be worn by all employees, vendors, and customers entering your facilities, except for those exempted from this requirement. The exemptions are for people for whom face coverings may not be safe:

- Children 6 years old or younger.
- Anyone who has trouble breathing, is incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance.
- Anyone who has been advised by a medical professional to not wear a face covering.
- Any worker to the extent of wearing a face covering creates a safety hazard at work under established health and safety guidelines.

Proper use of face coverings:

- Wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
- Face coverings shall be worn so that they completely cover your nose and mouth.
- Face coverings should be washed frequently.

Face coverings *should not be* surgical or medical masks, which are in short supply and urgently needed by healthcare workers. Instead, cloth face coverings such as bandanas, scarfs, or home-sewn fabric coverings are recommended.

Wearing a cloth face covering does not fully protect the wearer or eliminate the need to follow social distancing and hygiene measures, including physically distancing yourself from others and frequently washing your hands.

See the County Health Officer's Critical Guidance on Facial Coverings for more details:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/covid19/Pages/learn-what-to-do.aspx#howto>

Maintain Adequate Social Distancing

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

- Limit the number of people who can enter your facility at any time to ensure that people can easily maintain at least six feet of 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 the area where an order can be placed from the delivery/pick-up areas to prevent customers from gathering.
 - Adjust maximum room occupancy rules based on the size of the facility to limit the number of people in any room at a given time to allow adequate social distancing.
 - Consult the County's Shelter in Place Order and Frequently Asked Questions for any additional limitations on maximum occupancy that may apply to your facility.
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Prevention – Handwashing

Provide adequate soap and water, hand sanitizer (60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol), and/or disinfectant at or near the facility entrance and at other appropriate locations for use by the public and personnel, including at locations where there is frequent interaction between personnel and the public (like at the cash register).

As of April 18, 2020, food facilities are required by California law (Executive Order N-51-20) to allow employees to **wash their hands every 30 minutes and additionally as needed.** Staff must **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:

- When entering the kitchen.
- Before starting food preparation.
- After touching their face, hair, or other areas of the body.
- After using the restroom.
- After coughing, sneezing, using a tissue, smoking, or drinking.
- Before and after eating.
- When handling raw food then ready-to-eat food.
- After cleaning, bussing tables, or touching any items customers have used.
- Before putting on gloves. For information on glove use: www.ehinfo.org/coronavirus
- 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.

Other Measures

- Avoid bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food.
- Assign staff 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

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

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.

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.

Other Measures

- COVID-19 can last for days on some surfaces. Installing a contactless payment system can reduce physical contact of the screen/pen by the customer. If it is not feasible to install this
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method of payment, all payment portals, pens and styluses shall be disinfected *after each use*. Assign a designated staff to continuously clean and disinfect all high-touch areas. In addition to customer payment systems, these include:

- *Door knobs, faucet handles, and cabinet/drawer pulls*
 - *Cash registers, conveyor belts to the register, self-check out areas*
 - *Shopping carts and shopping baskets*
 - *Shared equipment like ladders, pallet jacks, and time clocks*
- Provide disinfecting wipes that are effective against COVID-19 near shopping carts and baskets for customers.
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Prevent Unnecessary Contact

Implement measures to prevent unnecessary physical contact:

- You may but are not required to prohibit customers from using reusable bags from home. If you allow customers to use reusable bags from home, impose mitigation measures to prevent contact between the bags and staff—such as requiring customers to bag their own groceries at the point of sale. Post your reusable bag protocol at the facility entrance to notify customers.
- Prohibit product sampling.
- Prohibit customers from bringing their own mugs, food containers, or other reusable items from home (except for bags, with precautions above).
- Disallow self-service by customers, including beverage stations, bulk-item food bins, coffee grinding stations, and food bars. Staff may be stationed at the self-service station to fill/grind/dispense the beverages, coffee, and unpackaged food items, including adding condiments into products (like cream into coffee), then handing it off to the customer.
- Lids for cups, condiments, utensils, and napkins shall be given to customers upon request.
- Do not shake hands with customers.

Other Measures

- 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 pregnant women.
 - Adjust or modify store hours to provide adequate time for regular, thorough cleaning and product stocking. Stagger stocking so that staff are in different aisles.
 - Provide a single, clearly designated entrance and separate exit to help maintain social distancing where possible.
 - Minimize exposure between cashiers and customers through social distance or use of barriers where social distancing cannot be maintained.
 - Increase remote (online and telephone) purchasing, delivery, and curbside pickup service options to reduce the number of customers entering the facility or waiting in line.
 - Schedule personnel breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to reduce the number of workers taking breaks together.
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Worker Health

Businesses must monitor the health of their workers.

- Screen all workers at the beginning of each shift for symptoms of illness.

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- 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 a worker 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>
Workers who are living with someone who has tested positive should also follow applicable instructions on this webpage.
 - If a worker test positive with COVID-19 while working and showing symptoms, the following steps shall be taken:
 - Immediately cease operation, close the facility, and thoroughly sanitize the facility. 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 worker to follow the instructions on the County’s COVID-19 Learn What to Do – If You Think You are Sick webpage.
 - Inform other workers 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 personnel to closely monitor themselves for any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, coughing, and/or shortness of breath) for 14 days.
 - If you have workers who are at high risk for severe illness from COVID-19, consider temporarily re-assigning them to non-public-contact duties.
 - Train your workers on the following: (1) [COVID-19 information](#) from the CDC, including how to prevent COVID-19 from spreading; (2) the need for frequent hand-washing, face-covering, social distancing, and other Protocol measures; (3) how to [self-screen](#) for symptoms; (4) the need to stay home and get tested if they have COVID-19 symptoms; (5) County [guidelines](#) for when it is safe to return to work if they are symptomatic or have tested positive; and (6) how to contact the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (866-870-7725). Personnel should be trained on new or modified measures immediately upon updating your Protocol.
 - Encourage workers to get tested at least once a month for COVID-19 in accordance with County guidance and give them information on testing locations:
<http://sccfreetest.org>. Testing is FREE and EASY.

Sick Leave Requirements

Effective April 16, 2020, California Executive Order N-51-20 requires that all employers with 500 or more employees nationwide 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, worker at warehouses where food is stored, and workers who pick-up or delivery 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 personnel. These measures 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 Department 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.

Visit www.EHinfo.org to provide your email address to receive the most up to date information electronically.

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: www.ehinfo.org/coronavirus
- For information on COVID-19 testing in the County—including who should get tested and where—visit the Santa Clara County Public Health Department website: <http://sccfreetest.org>.
- 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
- For information from the CDC for grocery and food retail workers, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/grocery-food-retail-workers.html>