07 April 2020

Hospitality, Food Service, and Retail Considerations and Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19

Below is a compilation of considerations and guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Hospitality, Food Service, and Retail businesses and employers as it relates to the COVID-19 outbreak. Full guidance from CDC for businesses and employers can be found at here [1]. Interim Recommendations for US retail, institutional and manufactured food facilities with Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 can be found at [4] and [5].

Current Recommendations

- Emphasize staying home when sick and exclude sick employees.
  - Consider a flexible policy that permits employees to stay home for public health reasons (for example: sick, care of family member suffering from COVID-19, care of child due to school/childcare closures). Temporary discretions, such as advances on sick leave/paid-time-off, may provide flexibility to both employers and employees.
- Personal hygiene and respiratory etiquette are key prevention methods.
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing.
  - Cover cough and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of elbow.
- Emphasize hand hygiene prior to donning single use gloves; change gloves frequently.
- Cloth face mask are recommended. For more information, please visit: https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19 and https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html.
- Advise employees before traveling to check the CDC's Travel Health Notices [2].
- Currently, there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Like other viruses, COVID-19 can survive on surfaces or objects. Continue to follow the 4 key steps of food safety: clean, separate, cook, and chill.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19, should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for How to Conduct a Risk Assessment [3] of their potential exposure.
  - Employers need to inform employees if another employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection but maintain confidentiality as required by law.
- No change to current warewashing practices. Do not attempt to change current practices (for example: do not change sanitizer concentration or rinse temperatures).
- Consider implementing social distancing policies.
  - Increase physical space (6 feet) between both employees and customers (for example: carefully utilize drive through, partitions, curb-side pick-up, or delivery).

- Consider improving engineering controls for ventilation (for example, increase HVAC output to increase air exchange with outside air).
- Perform routine environmental cleaning and disinfection including but limited to:
  - Frequently touched surfaces (for example: credit card reader, countertops, registers, doorknobs, carts). Frequency: this can depend on usage and customer volume. A general rule is disinfect every 4 hours. Businesses can increase frequency up to "after every use" or as infrequent as "once per day."
  - Surfaces where blood or other bodily fluid may have contaminated a surface. Frequency: immediately.
  - Other uncommon surfaces your team deems likely to be contaminated through use.
  - Reminder: Never clean with chlorine and ammonia containing products at the same time. The resulting vapor can be harmful to health.
- For facilities that have a suspected/positive COVID-19 employee, a deep cleaning is necessary. Please follow our deep cleaning guidance which includes CDC recommendations.
- If food contact surfaces must be disinfected due to known viral contamination or bodily fluid, use the following procedures:
  - Pre-clean to remove gross soil, if needed.
  - Wash with degreaser or detergent cleaner.
  - Rinse with potable water.
  - Apply disinfectant. Note: Disinfectant must remain wet for the entire contact time listed on the product label. Check the product as contact times differ per product. It may be necessary to re-apply the disinfectant, especially for longer contact times.
  - Rinse with potable water.
  - Apply sanitizer.
  - Allow surface to drain and air dry.
- The EPA released a revised list of EPA-registered disinfectants effective against SARS-CoV-2 on March 13, 2020. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19. The listed products can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2
- The EPA still encourages use of products with an emerging viral pathogen claim. However, if those are not available or backordered, other products with a human coronavirus claim can be used in an emerging viral pathogen claim product's absence.
- Please note not all products are easily found on EPA's List N. Ask your chemical supplier for a list of all SKUs available from EPA's List N.

Criteria for Return to Work for Employees Confirmed or Suspected to have COVID-19

Employees with COVID-19 who have home-isolated can stop home-isolation once all 3 conditions listed below for the applicable scenario are met [6]:
- Employee did not get tested for COVID-19:
  1. No fever after 72 hours without the use of a fever reducing medicine
  2. Other symptoms of COVID-19, such as cough or shortness of breath, have improved
  3. At least 7 days have passed since symptoms appeared
- Employee did get tested for COVID-19:
  1. No longer have a fever without the use of fever reducing medicine
  2. Other symptoms, such as cough or shortness of breath, have improved
  3. Received two negative COVID-19 test in a row spaced ≥24 hours apart

References:

1. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html
2. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Vaccines. Medicines. Advice. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel
3. Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Exposures: Geographic Risk and Contacts with Laboratory-confirmed Cases. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html
4. US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Disease 2019. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/
5. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html
6. Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Interim Guidance). https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/hcp-return-work.html