

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Food Sector

Keeping employees and customers safe – adaptable information for food sector businesses

Keeping the Workplace Safe

Food sector businesses should administer health checks on employees/visitors on arrival and in the middle of the working day. A health safety team should record the following information, isolating and seeking medical support for staff as necessary:



Note employees'/visitors' names, surnames and time of entry and exit. Check employees' temperatures and ensure they sanitize hands. Institute single-file, one-way entry and exit from buildings. Avoid cross-contamination between people, products, and processes.



A body temperature above 37.5C or 99.5F is considered a red light. The employee/visitor should be prevented from entering.



Note if an employee has a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or is sneezing. Employees who display these symptoms should immediately be directed to a medical professional for further guidance.



Follow all the COVID-19 safety guidelines to avoid catching or transmitting the disease. These include wearing masks, sanitizing/washing hands, and practicing social distancing.

Keeping the Workplace Clean



Coronavirus can survive on door handles, benches, tools, equipment, and many other surfaces, for a few hours or even several days, depending on the type of surface, the temperature and humidity. All workplace surfaces should be cleaned regularly with a strong disinfectant, such as ethyl alcohol (70 percent) or sodium hypochlorite (0.5 percent).



Drivers and others delivering to food sector premises should remain in their vehicles during delivery, when possible. Drivers should carry hand sanitizer, disinfectant, and paper towels. They should sanitize hands before handling delivery documents. Disposable containers and packaging should be used when possible. For reusable containers, observe appropriate cleaning protocols.



Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Foodborne exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 is not known to be a route of transmission. However, it's always critical to follow the 4 key steps of food safety – clean, separate, cook, and chill – to prevent foodborne illness (FDA).



Staff should wash hands before and after meals. Plastic barriers should separate employees from food serving areas. Lunch breaks should be staggered to avoid crowding. Tables and chairs should be cleaned regularly.

These guidelines are drawn from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the United States. For more information visit: <https://www.who.int> and <https://www.fda.gov/home>

IFC's Global Food Safety Program

For more than 15 years, IFC has offered high-quality professional services to help companies apply international food safety standards and adapt sustainable business models. IFC's support includes food safety assessments, staff training, and guidance attaining international certification. Improved food safety is helping our clients meet regional and export market requirements, attract investment, realize cost savings, and strengthen their brands. The twin goals of IFC's Food Safety Program are healthier balance sheets, and high-quality food on plates. For more information visit: www.ifc.org/foodsafety



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