



Employee Safety Guidance for School Nutrition Programs During COVID-19 Pandemic

Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transferred through food. The primary way COVID-19 is transmitted is through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Thus, social distancing and maintaining a healthy work environment are essential for protecting yourself and others from contracting this virus.

What is "social distancing"? According to medical experts, social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least six (6) feet away from other people lessens your chances of catching COVID-19.

What are some ways to maintain a healthy work environment? Below are some recommendations to help manage the risk of exposure both in the kitchen and while delivering meals.

Employee Health and Hygiene

- If an employee has been in direct contact with a known COVID case, they should be self-quarantined at home for 14 days.
- If someone develops a fever or cough at work, they should go home immediately. They should return only after they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and/or cough suppressants.
- Per CDC guidance, employers should not require employees to provide a doctor's note to return to work because doing so will burden the medical system.
- As always, wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
 - Concentrate on scrubbing around and underneath fingernails and the cuticle area, which is where germs tend to reside. Rinse and dry hands thoroughly.
- Hand sanitizers must contain at least 60% alcohol and should be used when hand washing is not possible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Maintaining a healthy work environment

- Enforce and never compromise on the following: 1) staying home when sick; 2) covering coughs and sneezes; and, 3) washing hands frequently.
- Employees should always wear a face mask while in the workplace and while delivering meals. Masks should be cloth face coverings and not surgical or N-95 masks. Surgical and N-95 masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for healthcare workers.
- Do not share workstations, tools or equipment without cleaning and sanitizing between uses. The ideal distancing for labor would be a minimum of 6 feet between individuals, preferably at different tables or workstations.
- Provide tissues, waste baskets and EPA approved hand sanitizer in areas where employees gather or meet.
- Utilize disposable wipes and other cleaning materials so that frequently touched surfaces (counters, doorknobs, toilets, phones, etc.) can be properly wiped down by employees before each use.
- Do not touch one another for any reason, include greetings (no handshakes, high-fives, or elbow bumps).
- Wash hands immediately after unpacking and storing deliveries. When possible, discard outer boxes and packages.



Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Remember, cleaning and sanitizing are not the same. Clean with soap and water to remove dirt and food from surfaces. Sanitize with chemicals or heat to reduce germs. Surfaces that look clean may still have germs on them that you can't see. Sanitizing reduces these germs to safer levels. Always follow the product's label when using sanitizers.
- As mentioned, clean and sanitize surfaces that are frequently touched. Surfaces such as kitchen counters, doorknobs, bathroom surfaces, keyboards, phones, etc. should be cleaned often.
- Food-contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized after each use.
- Use disposable gloves for cleaning and sanitizing. Throw gloves away before leaving the area and wash hands.
- If you use disinfectant wipes, use according to package directions. Do not reuse the wipes to wipe down multiple surfaces. Throw used wipes in the trash.
- For a list of approved disinfectants from the Environmental Protection Division that are shown to be effective against SARS-CoV-2, click here:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
Note: These disinfection concentrations may exceed the allowable levels allowed for use on food contact surfaces such as dishes and utensils. Be sure to follow the label directions for FOOD CONTACT SURFACES when using the chemical near or on utensils and food contact surfaces.

Meal Delivery

- Consider asking for assistance with meal delivery. Contact your local Emergency Management Agency and make a Request for Assistance (RFA) through their local EMA Director.
- If possible, deliver meals only one or two times per week by providing multiple meals at one time.
- Staff should remain 6 feet away from families when delivering food and minimize time spent talking during deliveries.
- Social interactions among individuals should be limited to less than 5 minutes. No hugging or touching. Staff should never lean into the car.
- Staff should always wear gloves and cloth masks, particularly when handling/delivering food. Use hand sanitizer between changing gloves.