

COVID-19 Guidance for Food Workers & Food Establishments

On January 5, 2021 Governor Inslee announced “[Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery](#),” which lays out the process for Washington state to safely reopen while maintaining medical system capacity. Use the guidelines below to ensure worker and customer safety while operating during this pandemic:

- The general COVID-19 requirements and recommendations section applies to all food establishments and includes general information such as [customer self-service/buffet guidance](#) and [worker health & safety information](#).
- The industry-specific guidelines describe what Governor’s requirements apply to the specific food establishment described and provide a direct link. The guidelines also include additional clarifications and Department of Health recommendations.
- The frequently asked questions section includes questions we have received such as [what should a business do when a worker tests positive for COVID-19?](#)

Consult with your [local health department](#) for county specific requirements or restrictions. This guidance will be updated as more information becomes available.

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Summary of February 10, 2021 Changes

- The guidance has been updated to include the “Healthy Washington” plan information.
- Links to the Governor’s requirements have been added for:
 - [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries](#)
 - [Open Air and Outdoor Seating](#)
 - [Weddings, Funerals, and Events](#)
 - [In-Store Retail](#)
 - [Miscellaneous Venues](#)
- Restaurant, grocery store, hunger relief organization, and farmers market guidelines have been updated to include links to the appropriate Governor’s requirements, clarifications, and DOH recommendations.
- Guidelines for miscellaneous food establishments have been updated to include links to the appropriate Governor’s requirements, clarifications, and DOH recommendations.

General COVID-19 Requirements & Recommendations for all Food Establishments

Public Health Investigations

Contact your local health department within 24 hours if you suspect COVID-19 is spreading in your workplace or if you are aware of 2 or more employees who developed confirmed or suspected COVID-19 within a 14-day period. Use the [DOH Employee Health & Decision Strategies guidance](#) and [DOH Checklist for Businesses with Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19](#) to determine next steps. You should work with local health to:

- confirm the number of probable and confirmed cases,
- determine close contacts,
- ensure control measures are in place, and
- verify that your business is following appropriate industry-specific requirements to prevent further workplace transmission.

You may be asked to provide a list of all potentially exposed employees and customers. In addition, temporary closure of your business may be required such as when inadequate control measures are in place or workplace transmission is high.

COVID-19 Safety Plans

Develop a written plan that is at least as strict as the governor’s requirements and complies with the appropriate safety and health requirements and guidelines set by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries and the Washington State Department of Health. In addition, a comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation, and recovery plan must be developed and adhered to. A site specific COVID-19 monitor shall be designated at each location to monitor the health of individuals and enforce the COVID-19 safety plan. These plans must be retained onsite and made available to regulatory agencies upon request. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in sanctions up to, and including, license suspension.

Customer Log

Maintain a daily log of all guests that **voluntarily** provide contact information, including customer names, phone/email, and time/date they were in the facility. Maintain the log for 30 days to help with contact tracing. For more information see the [Governor's Customer Log Memo](#) & [Customer Log Template](#).

Cleaning, Sanitizing & Disinfecting

- Cleaning is a necessary first step for sanitizing and disinfecting chemicals to work effectively. Use soap and water to clean food and non-food contact surfaces.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces following routine procedures.
 - Use an EPA registered product (such as chlorine, quaternary ammonia or iodine) at a concentration appropriate for sanitizing food contact surfaces.
 - Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces throughout the day. This includes items such as utensils, cutting boards, and serving ware. Properly wash and sanitize dishes with chemicals or by a high-heat dishwasher after each customer's use.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch non-food contact surfaces frequently, such as customer restrooms, doors, handles for freezers/refrigerators, check-out counters, and payment touchpads.
 - Use an [EPA registered product](#) at a concentration that has been shown to be effective against COVID-19. Follow label directions.
 - If there are multiple contact times listed for viruses, use the longest contact time or the most concentrated solution.
 - Disinfection concentrations may exceed the allowable levels 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.
 - If disinfectants are in short supply, use alternative disinfectants (for example, 1/3 cup of household bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Follow label instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Bleach solutions are effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
 - To help protect your workers and customers, increase the cleaning and disinfection frequency of customer-access areas. Use a separate wiping cloth and solution when disinfecting the front of house and customer-access areas.
 - Consider removing decorative objects, papers, and other unneeded materials from counters. Unobstructed counter surfaces make it easier to clean and disinfect.

Recommendations

- Disinfect non-food contact surfaces frequently.
- See the NC State Extension Factsheets on COVID-19 Preventative Measures for more information:
 - [What is the Difference between Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting and Sterilizing?](#)
 - [Cleaning and Disinfection](#)

Hand Hygiene

- Ensure all employees wash their hands often. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Make sure each handwashing sink is always stocked with soap, paper towels, and warm, running water.
- Washington requires food workers use a barrier such as tongs, gloves, or other utensils to prevent hand contact with ready to eat food. The [Reducing Consumables in Food Establishments](#) document provides tips to reduce waste and prevent bare hand contact. Suggestions to reduce glove use include changing food handling procedures or using utensils.
- Recommend all employees cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If a tissue is not available, employees can sneeze into their shirt sleeve, but NOT into their hands. Discard tissues into a lined garbage bin and wash hands immediately with soap and water after each cough or sneeze.
- Remind employees to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs. The food safety rule requires workers to wash their hands whenever they touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

Customer Self-Service/Buffer Guidance

- Self-service at salad bars, buffets, and other communal food sources and drink stations may be open if increased safety is provided through the following:
 - Customers wear face coverings when not seated and eating or drinking.
 - Physical distancing of customers in line.
 - All sneeze guards, utensils, and other customer-service equipment are properly in place and used.
 - Any food that has been contaminated by customers or employees (i.e., touching food or sneezing and/or coughing along the service line) is discarded.
 - Staff monitor the areas to maintain proper food temperature and customer usage.
 - Serving utensil touchpoints are sanitized or replaced with clean utensils frequently.
 - Ensure non-food contact surfaces, particularly touchpoints such as counters, handrails, etc. are properly washed and disinfected frequently.
 - Hand gel, with 60% alcohol, is available for customer use.
- Provide wrapped self-service condiments and disposable service ware, such as single-service packets or carry-out utensils.
- Discontinue product sampling and demonstration stations, except for single portions offered in response to a consumer's request from the service counter.

Customer Health & Safety

- Businesses have the right to refuse service and are encouraged to not serve customers or visitors who aren't wearing face coverings. Businesses can offer accommodations such as curbside pick-up or delivery.
- Open screened doors/windows and use fans to increase ventilation of outdoor air, when possible. Adjust mechanical ventilation systems to bring in as much outside air as

possible. Increase filters to MERV 13 if the HVAC can accommodate. See [CDC recommendations on ventilation](#) for more information.

- Provide tissues, no-touch waste bins, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer in customer areas to reduce germ spread. Hand sanitizers should have at least 60% ethyl alcohol.

Entertainment

- Indoor entertainment (such as darts, billiards, and arcade games) must follow the Governor's requirements for [indoor entertainment](#).
- Live entertainment (such as music or comedy performances) must follow the Governor's requirements for [theater and performing arts](#).

Signage

- Post signs at entrances and throughout the store to inform customers to:
 - Stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Use cloth face coverings when visiting the establishment.
 - Practice proper physical distancing while in the establishment.

Recommendations

- Find COVID-19 specific posters and materials here:
 - [Washington State Coronavirus Response Partner Toolkit](#)
 - [King County Signs to Print and Post](#)
 - [CDC's COVID-19 Print Resources](#)

Menu, Ordering, & Payment

- Provide a menu using one of the following options:
 - Provide single-use disposable menus.
 - Reusable menus that are disinfected after each use.
 - Display menu options on a board or sign.
 - Use an app. service or website for customers to view the menu on personal devices.
- Use call-in/mobile ordering, contactless payment systems, or automated ordering, when possible.

Recommendations

- List allergens on the menu to reduce questions.
- Limit menu options to decrease the ordering time per customer.
- Disinfect check-out counters and payment touchpads at least every hour.
- Provide handwashing or hand gel for employees handling payment.

Worker Health & Safety

All food establishment owners have a general obligation to maintain a safe and healthy workplace in accordance with state and federal law and safety and health rules for a variety of workplace hazards.

- Develop COVID-19 specific employee illness policies and procedures:
 - Screen workers for COVID-19 symptoms prior to each shift by following the [Daily COVID-19 Screening of Staff and Visitors guidance](#). We recommend that workers

- take their own temperature at home and report to the person in charge (PIC) and stay home if they are experiencing a fever (100.4°F or higher).
- Exclude ill food workers for the required time and make sure that they are safe to return to work. The [Employee Health & Decision Strategies](#) document provides general information about COVID-19, including how it spreads, how to screen workers for symptoms, and requirements for isolation and quarantine.
- Follow current guidelines when responding to reported COVID-19 positive employee including reporting and contact tracing. Close any areas where an employee with probable or confirmed COVID-19 worked, touched surfaces, etc. until the area and equipment is cleaned and disinfected. Follow the [cleaning guidelines](#) set by the CDC to deep clean and disinfect.
- Follow Labor & Industries COVID-19 requirements to protect workers:
 - General Workplace Requirements:
 - [COVID-19 Prevention: General Workplace Requirements](#)
 - [COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Health Requirements](#)
 - Face Masks:
 - [Which Mask for Which Task?](#)
 - [Common questions and answers regarding worker mask requirements](#)
 - [Mobile-friendly eTool Selection Guide for Face Coverings, Masks and Respirators](#)
- Additional information is available at [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\) Resources](#) and [Paid Leave under the Washington Family Care Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).

Recommendations

- Review your sick leave policies and expand upon paid leave options for your workers, if possible. Offering paid sick leave will help ill employees take needed leave, while helping keep the rest of your employees and customers healthy.
- Talk with your workers about employee health requirements and expectations. Retrain your employees as needed.
- Workers sick with the symptoms matching COVID-19 should stay home. Employees with family members or caregivers with symptoms matching COVID-19 should also stay home.
- Per CDC guidelines, employers are encouraged not to require employees to provide a doctor's note to return to work, because doing so may burden the medical system.
- Learn more by reviewing [DOH's Resources for Workplaces and Employers](#) web page.

Guidelines for Restaurants, Bars, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries & Distilleries

All food establishments must follow the [General COVID-19 Requirements](#). Restaurants, bars, taverns, breweries, wineries and distilleries must follow the Governor's Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries](#). The Department of Health recommends the following:

Style of Service Recommendations

- For [open air-dining](#):
 - Increased air movement will make it difficult to keep hot food hot, especially if food is uncovered. Increase monitoring of hot holding temperatures and take appropriate corrective action, such as keeping lids on food, to keep hot foods above 135F.
 - Open doors and windows can allow pests to enter a building. Use screens, air curtains or other pest control measures when windows and doors are open. Also keep food and garbage containers covered or stored in protected areas.
 - Increased outdoor air can also let debris blow in. This added dust and dirt will require additional cleaning from staff. In addition to keeping foods covered, ensure cleaning and sanitizing materials are kept clean and separate from those used in the food preparation area.
 - Opening doors and windows will also change the air flow in the kitchen. Work with your HVAC technician if the exhaust fans are not properly removing moisture or cooking fumes in the kitchen.
- During phase 1, remove or stack tables and chairs in indoor dining areas that are closed.
- Work with your [local health department](#) to ensure safe processes if making changes to your menu, style of service, or to add more outdoor seating.
- If appropriate, consider donating food using food safety recommendations in this [guide](#).
- We encourage facilities that serve people at a [higher risk](#) for severe COVID-19 illness, such as nursing homes or retirement communities, to not provide communal dining. Instead provide in-room dining, pick-up, drive-through, or delivery services. If you choose to open communal dining, follow all requirements.

Physical Distancing Recommendations

- Barriers should be a smooth, rigid surface that is easily cleanable and of sufficient height to provide adequate protection from coughs and sneezes from nearby booths or tables.
- Have one staff person take a table's order, bring all their beverages/food/utensils, and take their payment, etc.
- Establish designated areas for pick-up and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

Guidelines for Grocery & Convenience Stores

All food establishments must follow the [General COVID-19 Requirements](#). Grocery and convenience stores must follow the [Governor's In-Store Retail Requirements](#).

Guidelines for Hunger Relief Organizations

All food establishments must follow the [General COVID-19 Requirements](#). Hunger relief organizations that distribute packaged foods, should follow the [Guidelines for Grocery Stores](#). Hunger relief organizations and meal programs that have restaurant-type models, should follow the [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Clarification: During Phase 1, hunger relief organizations that have restaurant-type models *may continue indoor dining/food service operations at 25% capacity*.

Best Practices for Different Food Pantry Service Models

We encourage you to consider using different service models to help protect workers and clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of your clients may be considered [high-risk](#) for COVID-19, and may be limiting their time in the community to continue to “Stay Home, Stay Healthy.” Consider adding/continuing drive-through, curbside pickup, or home delivery as service options to help meet the needs of these high-risk clients. The Department of Health recommends the following:

Drive-Through

- Maintain 6 feet of distance between workers and clients in the car, even if clients wear cloth face coverings.

Recommendations

- Provide pre-packed food boxes or bags, making them faster and easier to distribute.
- If allowing clients to choose what food they want, have clients email orders in advance. If in-person, verbally tell workers what food items they have chosen.
- Minimize contact by having clients provide information verbally (their name, number in household, and address if a new client or change of address for an existing client) or place their ID on a table or car dashboard to be viewed by a volunteer.
- Place food boxes directly in client’s vehicle to avoid hand-to-hand contact, when possible.

Curbside Pickup

- Maintain 6 feet of distance between workers and clients, even if clients wear cloth face coverings.
- Use floor markers to maintain 6 feet of distance between clients in indoor and outdoor lines.

Recommendations

- Provide pre-packed food boxes or bags, making them faster and easier to distribute.
- If environmental conditions allow, consider setting up tables outside rather than having clients come inside the building.
- Place prepackaged items in a grocery cart for the client to load into their own vehicle. Disinfect carts after each client use.
- If grocery carts are not available, have a designated volunteer hand over boxes and another designated volunteer check people in.

Delivery

- Maintain 6 feet of distance between workers and clients, even if clients wear cloth face coverings.
- Keep cold foods cold (41°F or below) during transport by using a cooler with gel packs/ice or a refrigerator. If unable to keep cold foods cold during delivery or if delivering to a client unable to refrigerate or consume immediately upon receipt, only deliver shelf-stable foods.
- Keep raw foods separate from cooked or ready to eat foods to avoid cross contamination.

Recommendations

- Provide home delivery or use designated pick-up areas for clients to maintain physical distancing.
- Routinely clean and disinfect shared equipment, vehicle touchpoints, coolers, and insulated bags used to deliver foods.

Self-Selected/Grocery-Style

- Follow your typical intake process while minimizing contact time with clients.
- Use floor markers to maintain 6-feet of distance between clients in indoor and outdoor lines.
- Assign workers to assist and monitor clients waiting to enter the establishment.
- Arrange flow of customers to eliminate bottlenecks and reduce crowding.
- Provide hand gel with at least 60% alcohol at the building entrance, when available.
- Stock onsite restrooms/sinks with adequate soap and paper towels and encourage clients to wash their hands before shopping.
- Maintain 6-feet of distance between workers and clients, even if clients wear cloth face coverings.

Recommendations

- When possible, provide shopping hours for people at [higher risk](#) for severe COVID-19 illness.
- Extend hours or open for an additional day to meet building occupancy requirements without reducing services. Consider having appointments or adding additional appointment times.
- Do not offer samples, food demos, or cooking classes.
- Pre-bag foods such as produce or baked goods, that are normally available for self-service.
- Reduce available food options to speed client time onsite. For example, only place on the shelf 3 different types of soup options.
- Increase circulation of outdoor air by modifying ventilation or opening screened doors/windows, when possible.

Guidelines for Farmers Markets

For the purpose of these guidelines, a farmer’s market is defined as a physical location with the primary purpose to provide a retail opportunity for 2 or more vendors that grow, raise, or process local agricultural products meet to sell products directly to consumers. All food establishments must follow the [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) above. Phase-specific requirements and recommendations are listed below. If food and drinks are served, follow the [Guidelines for Restaurants](#). For more information see the [Governor’s In-Store Retail Requirements](#) and the [Governor’s Miscellaneous Venues Requirements](#).

Clarification: During Phase 1, there is ***no restriction on the type of vendors that may sell at the market***. Live entertainment must follow the Governor’s requirements for [theater and performing arts](#). Follow the phase specific requirements in the “General Indoor and Outdoor Theater and Performing Arts Organizations and Performing Arts Events” section.

Phase 1 & 2

- Indoor markets must limit indoor capacity to 25% (not including employees) in both Phases 1 and 2.
- Outdoor markets must ensure 6-feet of physical distancing is maintained between customers or households.

Market Organizers

Operating during a pandemic is not business as usual. The market season may be dynamic and subject to change. Prior to making major changes, communicate with your [local health department](#) for county specific requirements or restrictions. The operational guidance below may help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure for the vendors and visitors at your market.

Recommendations

- Keep a log with notes on what works well and what needs to change before the next market event (such as providing more handwashing sinks).
- Use social media, email, or other methods to share updates on operating standards and expectations at the market. For example, encourage pre-ordering and “single shoppers” (one member of a family shops the market while others stay home) if possible.

Physical Distancing

- Modify the market layout to prevent visitors from gathering in groups.
 - Indoor Markets: Vendor booths must be placed a minimum of 6-feet away from adjacent booths. Keep the empty spaces unoccupied.
 - Outdoor Markets: Vendor booths must be placed a minimum of 6-feet away from adjacent booths, or there must be a physical barrier or wall separating booths or tables. Barriers should be at least 6 feet in height and must have two open sides/panels to allow air flow.
- Ensure 6-feet of separation is maintained between customers and vendors except for unavoidable, short-term exposures such as when taking orders, collecting payments and/or exchanging goods.
- Provide signs or spacing markers to promote 6-feet of distance between visitors. Signs for farmers markets are available here: [Printable Signs for Farmers Markets](#).
- Monitor the flow of customers to eliminate bottlenecks and reduce crowding. Create a plan for how to respond when people aren't in compliance with physical distancing measures and ask vendors to help ensure plans are followed.
- When possible, provide shopping hours for people at [higher risk](#) for severe COVID-19 illness and encourage customers to shop at less popular times to avoid congestion.
- Prohibit pets (except for service animals) to help minimize congestion.

Customer Health & Hygiene

- Visitors should self-screen for symptoms before they enter the market. Post signs at to inform customers to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Signs for farmers markets are available here: [Printable Signs for Farmers Markets](#)
- During Phases 1 and 2, discontinue product sampling and demonstration stations, except for single portions offered in response to a consumer's request from the service counter. Provide areas for customers to try samples while maintaining 6 feet of distance.

- Customers must wear a face covering anytime they are not actively eating or drinking. For more information about customer face coverings, see the [Overview of COVID-19 Statewide Face Covering Requirements](#).
- Ensure all market staff and visitors have the means to clean their hands. Install temporary, portable handwashing stations or alcohol-based hand antiseptic dispensers for market staff, volunteers, and visitors:
 - Handwashing stations must have soap; running, potable warm water; and single-use towels.
 - Antiseptic hand rubs must have at least 60% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
- Businesses have the right to refuse service and are encouraged to not serve customers or visitors who aren't wearing face coverings. Businesses can offer accommodations such as curbside pick-up or delivery.

Payment Handling

Money has not been linked to the spread of coronavirus, but it is still important to reduce direct hand contact with shoppers.

- When possible, allow mobile, credit card, or other cash-free payment options.
- Encourage customers to pre-order/pre-pay when possible.
- Disinfect check-out counters and payment touchpads at least every hour.
- Provide handwashing or hand gel for employees handling payment.
- When handling cash, tokens, checks, or change:
 - Designate a money handler separate from the worker handling products.
 - Ask for exact change to help limit additional handling.
 - Collect payment in a container rather than directly into hands.
- To disinfect wooden tokens, consider the following:
 - “Quarantine” tokens by holding in a container until the next week. Tokens held should not need additional disinfection for COVID-19.
 - Use a cloth wetted with disinfectant to clean wooden tokens or laminated paper, then air dry. Wash hands after disinfecting objects.

Guidelines for Miscellaneous Food Establishments

Events, Fairs and Festivals

Refer to the Governor's [COVID-19 reopening guidance page](#). Events may need to follow Governor's [Weddings, Funerals, and Events COVID-19 Requirements](#), the Governor's [Miscellaneous Venues Requirements](#), or additional industry requirements listed on the reopening guidance page. If food and drinks are served, follow the:

- Governor's Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries](#). [Outdoor and Open Air structures](#) may be used.
- Department of Health [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) and [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Weddings and Funerals

For more information see the [Governor's Weddings, Funerals, and Events COVID-19 Requirements](#). If food and drinks are served, follow the:

- Governor’s Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries. Outdoor and Open Air structures](#) may be used.
- Department of Health [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) and [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Airport Food Service

If food and drinks are served, follow the:

- Governor’s Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries. Outdoor and Open Air structures](#).
- Department of Health [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) and [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Clarification: During phase 1, indoor dining is prohibited. Food establishments at airports should provide take-out service and customers can bring food to physically distanced seating in central terminal or VIP lounges. During phase 2, follow existing guidance.

Hotels and Bed & Breakfasts

If food and drinks are served, follow the:

- Governor’s Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries. Outdoor and Open Air structures](#) may be used.
- Department of Health [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) and [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Clarification: During Phase 1, indoor dining is prohibited unless conditions are met to reclassify areas as [‘open-air’ dining](#). Food establishments in hotels should offer outdoor dining, provide room service, or only allow guests to pick up food items to go.

Child care, K-12 Schools & Higher Education

For more information, refer to the [Department of Health K-12 Schools 2020-2021 Guidance](#) and guidance for [Child Care, Youth Development and Day Camps](#).

Higher education should follow all dining restrictions and occupancy limits outlined in the Governor’s Roadmap to Recovery plan. If food and drinks are served, follow the:

- Governor’s Requirements for [Restaurants, Taverns, Breweries, Wineries and Distilleries. Outdoor and Open Air structures](#) may be used.
- Department of Health [General COVID-19 Requirements](#) and [Guidelines for Restaurants](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Does COVID-19 spread through food?

There is no current evidence COVID-19 is transmitted through food or water. History with previous outbreaks of coronavirus such as SARS and MERS suggest that people aren’t likely to become infected with coronavirus through food. However, limited research on the new coronavirus indicates that it can be shed in stool. It is not known at this time whether the virus can make people sick after it has passed through the digestive tract.

While we don’t believe the novel virus can spread through food, we do know other germs can. We highly encourage people to practice the following routine food safety procedures to reduce risk:

- Only handle food when healthy. People that are coughing, feverish, short of breath, vomiting or have diarrhea or other symptoms of illness should stay home.

- Wash hands to reduce the risk of illness. Always wash hands thoroughly before and during food preparation.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables before cutting or eating. Rinse raw agricultural products, such as heads of lettuce, under clean running water prior to cutting or serving. Ready-to-eat bagged lettuce does not need additional washing.
- Thoroughly cook whatever you can. Cooking destroys many germs, including coronavirus.
- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces. Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards, tables, utensils, and other food contact surfaces often.

Is it safe to sell unpackaged produce?

Yes, it is safe to sell unpackaged produce. COVID-19 is not known to be transmissible through food, including fruits and vegetables. We encourage pre-bagging and portioning produce to expedite purchasing and shopping time by customers. Always wash hands thoroughly before and during food handling.

Are businesses required to maintain a customer log to help with contact tracing?

Yes. As part of the Safe Start Plan, businesses must keep a daily log of all guests that voluntarily provide contact information, including customer names, phone, email, and time they entered the facility. Keep the log for 30 days to help with contact tracing. Logs are only required for customers that volunteer their information as clarified in a [memo](#) issued by Governor Inslee on May 14, 2020.

What is the role of money in the spread of COVID-19?

According to CDC, money is not a primary mode of transmission of coronavirus. However, it may be possible to transfer the virus by touching a contaminated surface and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes. Customers and employees are encouraged to properly wash their hands often throughout the day, including after handling money and before they eat or touch their eyes, nose, and mouth.

Can you get COVID-19 from handling reusable shopping bags?

It is unlikely to get infected with COVID-19 by touching reusable shopping bags. According to the CDC, touching surfaces that may have the virus on it is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. To help address any concerns, follow these recommendations:

- Encourage self-bagging when customers use reusable shopping bags brought from home.
- Provide single use bags for clerks to use while bagging customer groceries.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% ethyl alcohol) for cashiers.
- Ensure all employees wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Remind employees to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs.

What type of face mask should food workers wear?

Employers are required to provide workers with the appropriate type of face covering, mask, or respirator depending on the [level of risk for their specific type of work](#). For example:

- Reusable cloth face coverings are required when risk for transmission is low. Examples include waiters at restaurants, and cafes only offering curbside pick-up services.
- Disposable masks are required when risk for transmission is medium. Examples include grocery-store produce stockers who work around customers, or kitchen workers in restaurants.

Employees may also bring their own face covering. To clarify the requirements, the Department of Labor & Industries has developed [Which Mask for Which Task](#) and the [eTool Selection Guide](#) to help employers determine proper selection and use of face coverings and respirators. The department also released an [FAQ Page](#) to respond to common questions about masks, including options for reasonable accommodation for workers with a medical exemption.

As a business, what should I do when a worker tests positive for COVID-19?

You are required to contact your local health department within 24 hours if you suspect COVID-19 is spreading in your workplace. You are also required to contact your local health department if you are aware of 2 or more employees who have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 within a 14-day period. Use the [DOH Employee Health & Decision Strategies guidance](#) and the [DOH Checklist for Businesses with Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19](#) to determine next steps. You should work with local health to:

- Confirm the number of probable and confirmed cases.
- Determine close contacts.
- Ensure control measures are in place.
- Verify that your business is following the Safe Start plan to prevent further workplace transmission.

You may be asked to provide a list of all potentially exposed employees and customers. In addition, you may need to close your business temporarily if you have inadequate control measures or workplace transmission is high.

When should I discard food that may have been exposed to COVID-19?

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted to humans through food or food packaging materials. The FDA does not anticipate food will need to be held, recalled, or withdrawn from the market if it is exposed to coronavirus through a COVID-19 positive food facility worker. Discard food contaminated by coughs or sneezes. For more information see [FDA's Food Safety and Coronavirus Disease website](#).

What should I do if I am having a hard time finding supplies?

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the availability and cost of a wide variety of products commonly used in food establishments. The [Supply Chain Issues & Conservation Strategies](#) document provides tips to conserve supplies that may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is required for restaurants that want to start selling grocery-type items?

The [Guidance for Restaurants Selling Grocery-Type Items](#) document provides information about how permitted restaurants can change their style of service. The guidance includes how to repackage food or add grocery-type food items for retail sale during the pandemic.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee's proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19- this is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share accurate information with others to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Weekends: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.