



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency ♦ Environmental Health Division

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NOTICE TO FOOD FACILITY OPERATORS OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS DUE TO CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Background	<p>COVID-19 or “coronavirus” is a disease that causes respiratory illness and is spread through air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces and subsequently touching mucous membranes.</p> <p>As of 5:00 P.M., March 15, 2020, at least 11 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Santa Cruz County. At least 258 cases and at least three deaths have been reported in adjacent Bay Area counties.</p>
Legal Order	<p>Effective 12:01 A.M. on March 17, 2020 until 11:59 P.M. April 7, 2020, a Shelter in Place Order was issued by the Santa Cruz County Health Officer in order to prevent the spread of this disease in our community. This Order establishes conditions under which a food facility operator can continue to provide food service. The Order is effective until it is extended, rescinded, suspended, or amended in writing by the Health Officer.</p>
Mandatory Conditions for Food Service 	<p>Food vending facilities, restaurants, schools and other entities providing meals to the public can remain in service with the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals must not be allowed to sit down or dine on site • Measures are taken to prevent gathering of people including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Opening more registers at a grocery store ➤ Spacing individual waiting to pay or pick-up ➤ Relocating the point of purchase ➤ Establishing a drive through/ curb-side pick-up system ➤ Delivery <p>Drive through, drop off and delivery are being recommended to avoid conditions where individuals are closer than 6 feet while paying or waiting for food. Under no conditions shall the public be allowed to sit and eat on site.</p> <p>Food service staff should attempt to keep a distance between other staff as much as practical. Staff should be screened before start of work and evaluated throughout the course of the workday. Staff exhibiting signs of illness must be excluded immediately.</p> <p>Under no conditions shall a food facility be open if staff is ill, conditions noted below cannot be met, or if there is insufficient staff to maintain safe food service.</p>
ESSENTIAL FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS	
 Health and Training	<p>It is critical that food service workers or volunteers be screened for symptoms of illness prior to being allowed to commence food service work. Staff must also be trained to identify conditions or illnesses that would exclude them from food service so that they know when to stay home. It is not a good idea to pressure individuals to come in to work when they are ill. We all need to do our part in preventing the spread of illness in our community.</p> <p>Individuals with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing must be excluded due to the risk of COVID-19. Individuals with symptoms of other illness like diarrhea, vomit, nausea, nose drip and any illnesses communicable by food must also be excluded as is currently required under California Retail Food Code regulations.</p> <p>In addition to knowing when to stay home, staff must have working knowledge regarding processes needed keep food safe. Training must be provided based on their assigned duties before being allowed to work on their own.</p>



Handwashing and Food Handling

Adequate handwashing supplies must always be present, functional and equipped during service. A person must be in charge of ensuring these remain usable and stocked while preparing food and conducting clean-up activities.

We recommend use of alcohol-based (at least 60% Ethanol or 70% Isopropyl) hand sanitizer after handwashing. **Hand sanitizer shall not be used in lieu of handwashing.**

Gloves must be changed at a frequency required for handwashing. Staff shall wash their hands before putting on and upon changing gloves.

Food service staff shall wash their hands under, but not limited to, the following conditions:

- When entering the kitchen and before starting food preparation
- After touching the face, hair, and other areas of the body
- After using the restroom
- Between handling raw meat and ready to eat foods
- After sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue
- After smoking, eating, drinking and using a phone
- After cleaning tables, bussing, handling dirty dishes, and touching items in contact with patrons
- When hands become soiled

Provide a garbage can near the restroom exit door so that staff can dispose of paper towels used to open the door.

Measures must be taken to prevent contamination of food by:

- Washing hands between changes in activity including handling money
- Minimizing bare hand contact with ready to eat food
- Removing any non-essential individuals in the food service area
- Preventing non-service animals from entering the facility
- Avoiding using cups or containers provided by the public for now
- Sneezing away from food and into an area that will prevent spreading of aerosol droplets like an elbow

Proper sneezing procedure can help protect others from colds, flu and COVID-19.



Sanitizing and Disinfecting

Food service equipment must be washed, rinsed, sanitized with an approved sanitizer and allowed to air dry. Utensils in contact with potentially hazardous (perishable) foods must be sanitized at least every 4 hours or more frequently if they become contaminated. Standard practice is to immerse utensils and equipment in a solution of 100-200 PPM chlorine for 30 seconds, 200-400 PPM quaternary ammonium for one minute or other EPA approved sanitizer as directed by the manufacturer. Dishwashers must be set to dispense 50-200 PPM chlorine or heat the utensil to 160°F. Sanitizer or temperature verification must be provided and used to ensure proper sanitizing.

Disinfection Requirements Due to COVID-19

Wipe down surfaces that are used by or contaminated by serving the public on a frequent basis to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Special care should be taken to disinfect surfaces if there is suspicion, they were handled by an ill individual. Examples of surfaces that are touched by patrons on a regular basis are:

- Door handles
- Grocery carts
- Menus
- Credit card machines
- Cash registers and counters

Use 1/3 cup of bleach per gallon of water to disinfect surfaces and properly disable the virus. Alcohol of at least 60% Ethanol or 70% Isopropyl concentration can be used to wipe surfaces that cannot withstand chlorine. Below are links to other disinfectants that are effective against COVID-19 (some may not be adequate for surfaces or utensils in contact with food, use chlorine or other approved sanitizers for these areas):

- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>

Additional Information

Up to date legal orders, information, status reports, and web site links are available in the Santa Cruz County Public Health Communicable Disease Control web site at:

[http://santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/CommunicableDiseaseControl/Coronavirus.aspx](http://santacruzhealth.org/HSAHome/HSAHome/HSADivisions/PublicHealth/CommunicableDiseaseControl/Coronavirus.aspx)

Any questions regarding food safety can be directed to the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Division for triage at: www.sceeh.org