



COVID-19

# FOOD DELIVERY AND SAFETY

The consequences of COVID-19 are far-reaching and immense, but one of the most immediate has been the closure of all dine-in establishments. From cafes to delis to fine dining establishments, many businesses find themselves offering new delivery and take-out options to maintain business revenue, keep employees on the job, and provide more local dining options.

While this means many businesses have established new sources of revenue to continue serving loyal customers, offering these services creates additional risk exposures. However, as with all risks, steps can be taken to mitigate hazards and ensure customers have a safe and pleasant experience while continuing to enjoy food from their favorite local restaurant.

## MANAGING FOOD PICK-UP AND DELIVERY<sup>1</sup>

### Food Safety

Always follow the four key steps to food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Always observe established food safety practices for time and temperature control, preventing cross-contamination, storage of food, etc.

Disinfect surfaces repeatedly touched by employees or customers such as doorknobs, equipment handles, countertops, etc.

Frequently clean and disinfect all floors and counters and any other facility access areas.

Use EPA-registered disinfectants.

Always prepare and use sanitizers according to label instructions.

While there may be changes to the standard food preparation procedures, service, or delivery functions, continue to ensure that cooked foods reach the proper internal temperatures before being served, cooled, or during delivery and pick-up.

If preparing hot foods that are then cooled rapidly for later use, check the temperatures of foods being chilled either in refrigerators or by rapid cooling techniques.

Minimize the time food is stored, displayed, or delivered; during this time, the temperature risks slipping into the danger zone - between 41°F and 135°F.

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold by transporting in appropriate containers.

Keep cold foods cold by using coolant materials such as gel packs.

Confirm that insulated cases are working and keeping hot food hot.

Foods should always be separated to avoid cross-contamination, e.g., raw foods kept separately from prepared foods.

Employees who are performing new duties or activities should be trained according to established procedures.

Sanitizers and disinfectants should continue to be used for their designed purposes.

Ware-washing machines should be checked to ensure that they are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.

Remember: hot water can be used in place of chemicals to sanitize equipment and utensils in manual ware-washing machines.

If you donate food to food recovery or charitable organizations, check for State and local guidelines.

## Delivery Driver Safety

High-touch surfaces such as door latches and touchpads within the vehicle should be kept clean by increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting.

Surfaces can be wiped down using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Ensure that employees read the label and follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.

Establish protocols that ensure social distancing while delivering food, e.g., text alerts for delivery or calling when deliveries have arrived and "contactless" delivery.

## During Pick Up

Any operations that require customers to use common utensils or dispensers, such as salad bars, buffets, and beverage service stations, should be discontinued.

If offering a take-out/carry-out option, evaluate the facility to identify any operational changes required to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from others.

Designate pick-up zones for customers to help manage social distancing.

- Find ways to encourage social distancing while customers wait in line for service or check out. Verify that you are in accordance with the applicable State or local requirements.
- Customers should be discouraged from bringing pets into stores or waiting areas, except for service animals.

Increase the frequency with which high-touch surfaces such as countertops are cleaned and disinfected.

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## During Food Transportation

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold by storing food in the appropriate containers and using the correct packing materials, e.g., using gel packs for cold food and ensuring insulated cases are correctly functioning.

Keep foods separated to avoid cross-contamination, e.g., raw foods should be kept separately from food that is ready for consumption.

Securely wrap all food during transportation to prevent cross-contamination of the food.

Routinely clean and sanitize coolers and insulated bags used to deliver foods.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19#operations>