

Preparing for COVID-19 in Food and Lodging Facilities Frequently Asked Questions.

How is COVID-19 Spread?

According to the Center for Disease Control or CDC, COVID-19 is spread from person to person in close contact with one another (six feet or less) through respiratory droplets when the infected person coughs or sneezes. It may also be possible to get COVID-19 through touching surfaces or objects contaminated with COVID-19 and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Persons diagnosed with COVID-19 have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of cough, shortness of breath and fever.

What can I do for my customers?

Post handwash signs reminding customers to wash their hands. Also providing tissues and hand sanitizer for their use may help reduce the spread of viruses.

Does my staff need to wear face masks?

No, basic surgical masks won't protect you from getting COVID-19.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted in Food?

According to the CDC COVID-19 is not spread through food. It can however, spread through ill employees or guests. Wear gloves when preparing ready to eat foods and wash raw produce in potable water.

Can I contact COVID-19 from a package shipped from overseas?

According to the CDC there is no risk of contacting COVID-19 from packaging or goods shipped from overseas. The US is still receiving cargo from overseas.

What should be our plan of attack in dealing with COVID-19 in our facilities?

The health department recommends you pay close attention to three specific areas within your facility. First, do you have employee illness policies? Are they current? Are your expectations clearly communicated to your employees and have they been trained? Secondly, pay close attention to high touch surfaces where employees and guests put their hands and make them a top priority for cleaning and disinfecting. The frequency in which you are cleaning these areas should be increased. And lastly, what are your cleaning and disinfecting procedures? Do you have policies in place and does your staff have the proper training, tools and supplies needed for effective cleaning and sanitizing? Focusing on these three areas will help to reduce the spread of viruses in your facility.

Can COVID-19 be carried on hair and beards?

This disease is primarily spread through coughing and sneezing. It is important to take extra precautions with personal hygiene practices. When coughing or sneezing it is important to make sure that particulate matter is removed from your face, hands, hair and beard. Now is a good time to be reviewing your personal hygiene policies and retraining staff.

What if I have an employee diagnosed or showing symptoms of COVID-19?

Employees diagnosed or exhibiting signs of COVID-19 should not report to work. Regarding sick employees in general please refer to the Wisconsin Food Code ATCP 75 2- 201.

Can we take employees temperatures as they report to work?

No specific temperature has been linked to COVID-19 and some people do not exhibit any symptoms. A better approach would be to educate your employees on the symptoms of COVID-19 and advise them to see a doctor if they suspect they have the illness.

What should I do about sick guests?

The CDC recommends that people who are sick stay at home. Additionally, individuals at higher risk contracting COVID-19 should avoid public gatherings. Some people may disregard this or be asymptomatic. The best thing you can do if you believe someone ill has been at your facility, is to reinforce handwashing and take extra care when cleaning and sanitizing areas this person may have touched. It is important to eliminate viruses on surfaces to reduce the spread.

Should I report sick employees or guests to the health department?

Yes, it is important that the health department have as much information as possible, we may need to track this individual's contact with others.

What if one of my employees has a close family member that has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

As there are several factors involved, it would be best to contact the local health department to discuss the best course of action.

How long can COVID-19 live on a surface?

As this information is not yet known, the CDC recommends if someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has been in your facility, close that area for thorough cleaning and sanitizing. Also please contact your local health department for additional guidelines.

What about self service areas?

Self service areas are not allowed at this time.

What about my lodging facilities?

There is currently no restriction for lodging, however, you want to make sure any food contact surfaces get sanitized properly between all guests, and change sheets and blankets on beds even if they don't get used.

Washing comforters and bed covers should be done as much as possible or removed from the room. Housekeepers should make sure they have proper sanitizing levels in their cleaning buckets or spray bottles and make sure to sanitize all common surfaces, including:

- Counters & tables
- Remote control & phone
- Refrigerator
- Dresser
- Bath vanity, shower, toilet, etc.

If your lodging establishment also has a restaurant, you need to follow the precautions above for restaurants as well.

What are some other considerations?

It's important to have the correct sanitizer levels in your dish machines and in your sanitizer buckets, so that you don't just spread viruses around. As the water gets dirty you want to switch out your sanitizer solution and rags. Dirty water will bind up your sanitizer. The busier your facility is and the more surfaces being sanitized the more frequently you will need to switch out the sanitizer and cloths. Check the sanitizer level of your dish machine at each shift and the levels in your sanitizer buckets frequently

Also make sure to wipe down and sanitize surfaces you normally would not such as pool sticks, cue balls, menus, condiment containers, chairs, etc.

Additional resources:

<https://www.bayfieldcounty.org/1178/12057/CORONAVIRUS-COVID-19#>

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm>

<https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://restaurant.org/Covid19>