



10 THINGS

food businesses should know about food safety and COVID-19

FAO food safety experts explain what is known so far about **COVID-19 and food**, offering hygiene advice for business operators

1 The safety and integrity of the food supply chain must be maintained

More than ever, food businesses all along the food chain have the responsibility for maintaining a safe and available food supply that consumers can trust while safeguarding the health and safety of employees.



2 Align food safety practices with COVID-19-related measures

Continue to follow national food safety regulations while protecting the staff and the food. Changes to the flow of operations should be considered and staff trained to comply with the new workflows and distancing requirements.

3 Reinforce good hygienic practices and standard operating procedures

Introduce stringent hygiene and sanitation measures and run refresher hygiene and communicable disease training. Even if food inspectors cannot visit premises, food businesses must understand that everyone is still relying on a safe supply of food.



4 Maintain effective sanitation

Clean, sanitize and disinfect work environments in line with Codex General Principles of Food Hygiene. The virus is destroyed by standard detergents and disinfectants. However, to protect staff there might be a need to introduce additional cleaning operations for areas that are exposed to human touch, e.g. toilets, door handles, canteen areas, break areas.



5 Specific precautions for food workers

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as disposable gloves and masks, can protect food workers and prevent the spread of the virus if used properly. Gloves and masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-washing. Food workers should be trained on the proper use of PPE.



6 Illness in the workplace

All staff must report COVID-19 symptoms or confirmed illness immediately and should not go to work. If symptoms develop at work, staff must be isolated until medical advice is available. Any people who have been in close contact with ill staff must be notified and appropriate sanitation measures taken.



7 Retail stores

Physical distancing needs to be considered for both staff and consumers. Sanitize high touch and food contact surfaces. Food businesses need to adapt to changes in consumer demand, ensure perishable foods remain safe and avoid food waste.

8 Distribution and E-commerce

Follow existing Codex guidelines for the transport of food in bulk and semi-packed food. When delivering food purchased online the courier should wear gloves and mask, change them as necessary and ensure the hygienic integrity of the delivery.



9 Eateries, take away and street food

Maintain physical distancing. Where possible deploy designated pick-up zones for customers and offer contactless deliveries and payments. Again good hygiene and sanitation are key.



10 There is no current evidence food transmits the new coronavirus

The virus is transmitted primarily through person to person contact. Handling, producing, processing, and selling foods is not considered a danger for infection with coronavirus.

