

Recommendations for Essential Food Distribution Providers Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19)

March 26, 2020

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency in the District of Columbia, many non-profit organizations, food retailer establishments, and farmers' markets have mobilized to address the need for food distribution to residents.

To help prevent further transmission of COVID-19, the DC Department of Health is providing the following recommendations.

Operational Conditions at Food Distribution Sites:

- Booths (no seating), staff, and customers should be spaced at least six (6) feet apart (including while waiting in line). Operators should minimize waiting lines as much as possible.
- Post signs reminding customers of the following best practices:
 - [Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
 - [Social Distancing Guide](#)
- Limit the sale and distribution of food to whole uncut produce and pre-packaged food items. Where possible, pre-bag all food items for sale and distribution.
- No food preparation booths or sampling of food.
- Ensure food products are protected from customer contamination by limiting customer contact.
- Utilize pre-pay options when possible in order to decrease person-to-person interaction.

Food Distribution Staff and Volunteers:

- Employees with cold or flu-like symptoms should stay home (this includes minimal symptoms like a sore throat).
- Employees who appear to be ill upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be sent home immediately.
- Wear gloves whenever handling food products.
 - Change gloves and wash hands when changing activities.

Hand Washing Instructions for Food Distribution Staff and Volunteers:

- Wash hands and arms with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before:
 - Eating or drinking
 - Putting on gloves
- Wash hands after these activities:
 - Using the restroom
 - Touching your hair, face, body, or clothes
 - Sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue
 - Smoking, eating, drinking, or chewing gum
 - Emptying or taking out the garbage
 - Handling money and making change
 - Removing gloves
 - After engaging in other activities that might contaminate the hands
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

General Cleaning at Food Distribution Sites:

- Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces such as food contact and work surfaces, tabletops, cash register counters, handwashing sinks, and trash cans frequently each day.
 - Approved disinfectants can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them: Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

DC Health is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all DC residents. To help with this effort, we encourage everyone to regularly check coronavirus.dc.gov for the most up to date information related to the District’s COVID-19 response.