Guidelines for Grocery Stores During COVID-19 Outbreak

CDC, FDA and USDA are not aware of any reports at this time that suggest COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. Current evidence shows the biggest risk of transmission of COVID-19 is being around individuals who are symptomatic. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the following public health practices are recommended for grocery stores:

Assisting your Customers:

- Provide disinfecting wipes or other methods for customers to use on carts, handles, touch pads and any other human contact points.
- Post signage that encourages appropriate social distancing.
- Discourage the use of reusable bags.
    - If allowing reusable bags, ask customers to bag their own items.
- Practice social distancing by maintaining a minimum of six feet distance from others when possible:
    - Provide signage to indicate six feet of distance in areas where lines will form (entrances and exits).
    - Have aisles be one-way where practical to maximize spacing between customers. Identify the one-way aisles with conspicuous signage and/or floor markings.
    - Install barriers, such as Plexiglass, to protect staff.
        - If the installation of barriers is not feasible, consider placing a table, chair, or other object between the pay station and the customer.
    - Offer alternative shopping methods: Online shopping, curbside pick-up and delivery.
    - Provide designated shopping hours for high-risk populations.

Occupancy:

- Cap at 50% of store capacity based on local fire code to maximize spacing between customers. Staff should maintain a count of the number of customers entering and exiting stores.
- Communicate with customers through in-store signage, public service announcements, and advertisements where practical, that should there only be one person per household during shopping trips, whenever possible.

Self-Service Areas (Produce, Bulk Food Bins, Salad Bars, Donuts, Water Stations):

- If customer contamination, such as coughing and sneezing, is observed remove items from sale and discard.
- Discontinue customer self-service buffets, salad bars, and bulk food bins with common use utensils such as tongs and spoons or communal touch surfaces such as pumps.
    - Self-service areas with single-use utensils, such as deli tissues, are acceptable.
- Frequently disinfect commonly touched areas on water stations.
- Discourage the use of customer's personal items such as reusable bags, cups, and containers.

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Employee Operated Service Areas (Deli/Meat/Bakery): When handling food, always follow food safety practices to prevent foodborne illness. Many signs and logs and templates are available at www.snhd.info/ferl.

- See "SNHD's COVID-19 Guidance for Food Establishments."
- Handwashing
  - Wash hands before starting food preparation tasks. Hand sanitizer should <u>not</u> be used to replace hand washing.
  - Eliminate bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods by using single-use gloves or other barriers (tongs, scoops, deli tissues).
  - Wash hands prior to putting on gloves.
- Have guests maintain adequate social distancing of at least six feet of distance.
  - Place tape or other markings to indicate customer lines.
- Reduce physical contact by placing food on the counter instead of directly handing it to the customer.
- Discontinue sampling of food.

At the Register:

- Have customers handle their own loyalty and payment cards for a contact free transaction.
- Place tape or other markings at least 6 feet apart in customer line areas to indicate appropriate social distancing.
- Encourage the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol after touching face and if person-to-person contact occurs.
- If gloves are used, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth while wearing gloves.

Cleaning and Sanitizing:

- In open food areas, use the cleaning and sanitizing chemicals approved for food contact surfaces and follow the directions.
- Although food grade sanitizers are not thought to be effective against COVID-19, good food safety practices should be maintained.
- Gloves used during cleaning and sanitizing must not be used for other tasks. Wash hands after removing gloves.

Disinfection: Disinfection is recommended for rooms or areas that people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 have visited and for high touch surfaces. Follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations "Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations" using a disinfectant on the EPA's List N.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and train employees for the use of all chemicals (e.g. concentration, application method, personal protective equipment, and contact time, etc.).
  - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using soap and water prior to disinfection.

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- After disinfection-level chemicals are used on food contact surfaces, they must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized with chemicals and concentrations approved for food contact surfaces.
- High touch surfaces include, but are not limited to, shopping carts/baskets, conveyor belts, lane dividers, electronic payment and point of sale terminals, pens, self-checkout lanes, refrigerator/freezer door handles, restrooms, soda fountain touchpoints, counters, and tables and chairs. Back of the house high touch surfaces include but are not limited to machinery buttons, faucet handles, door handles, and refrigerator/freezer handles or push plates.

Employee Health Policy: Continue your employee health policy of excluding or restricting food handlers with vomiting, diarrhea, fever with sore throat, infected wounds on the hands and arms, and jaundice. In addition:

- Consider using an "Employee Screening Questionnaire" for COVID-19 symptoms at the beginning of each person's shift.
- **Employees with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 shall be excluded.** If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality.
- **Employees who have symptoms of fever, cough, or shortness of breath should notify their supervisor and stay home.**
  - Sick employees should follow CDC recommendations for "What To Do if You Are Sick."
  - Employees should not return to work until **ALL THREE** things have happened:
    - No fever for at least three full days without the use medicine that reduces fever AND
    - Other symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath have improved AND
    - At least 7 days have passed since the first symptoms appeared.
- **Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival** at work or who become sick during the shift should immediately be sent home and follow CDC recommendations for "What To Do if You Are Sick."
- **Employees who are well but who have a household member sick with COVID-19** should self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor their health. They should call their healthcare provider and the SNHD if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 during their self-isolation.

This shall remain in effect until April 30, 2020, unless renewed by a subsequent Directive