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**Interim Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Food Manufacturing Facilities
and/or Retail Food Stores for COVID-19**

To help prevent spread of COVID-19, procedures and supplies should be in place to encourage proper hand and respiratory hygiene as well as routine cleaning and disinfection of high-risk locations. This guidance is provided for any food manufacturing facilities, food distribution centers or retail food stores so that owners, operators and other individuals can incorporate these procedures into their facility protocols.

Background

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called corona viruses.

What steps should be taken to clean and disinfect against COVID-19?

- All facilities should continue performing routine cleaning and sanitization of their facilities. Additionally, high-risk locations warrant cleaning **and** disinfection on a regular schedule. Examples of high-risk locations include:
 - Restrooms – clean and disinfect all restroom surfaces, fixtures, door knobs, push plates, and switches at least once daily
 - Dining areas/break rooms – clean and disinfect counters, tables, and chairs at least once daily
- If an individual with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 was symptomatic while in your facility, you should immediately contact your local health department and clean and disinfect throughout the area. If a food prep area requires disinfection, the area must be washed, rinsed and sanitized after disinfection to remove the residue left behind by the disinfecting chemical.
- Disinfection in customer-facing areas:

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- Store entrance door hand contact point(s)
- Reach in cooler/freezer doors
- Carriages/baskets
- Bulk food customer self-serve area(s); bakery, nuts/grains, dried fruits
- Carry out ordering and pick up counters
- Deli/meat/seafood customer order/pick up counter(s)
- Check-out belts/counters
- Customer card reader touch pad
- Register touch screen/scanner
- Store phone(s)

Standard Infection Control Practices

As part of standard infection control practices, routine cleaning should be rigorous and ongoing. Time should be allocated for individuals to routinely clean. Surfaces touched most frequently must be prioritized for routine cleaning because these surfaces can be reservoirs for germs and an exposure pathway for transmission to people through contact with these surfaces.

Examples of priority areas for routine cleaning include:

- High contact surfaces that are touched by many different people, such as light switches, handrails, cart handles, equipment buttons, shared equipment and door knobs/handles
- Floors and walls
- Trash containers
- Restrooms
- Heat and air conditioner vents
- Horizontal surfaces and light fixtures
- Frequently used equipment
- Uniform, protective equipment and/or linens

Examples of frequently touched surfaces:

- Shared equipment, telephones, computers, keyboards, mice
- Counters, tables, chairs
- Door handles and push plates
- Handrails
- Kitchen and bathroom faucets
- Equipment surfaces and buttons
- Light switches
- Remote controls

Social Distancing

Note that on March 31, 2020, Governor Mills signed [Executive Order 28](#) FY 19/20 that restricts the number of people allowed at essential businesses at any one time. The number of people who may enter essential business' retail space is as follows:

- Less than 7,500 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 5.
- More than 7,500 and less than 25,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 15.
- More than 25,000 and less than 50,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 50.
- More than 50,000 and less than 75,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 75.
- More than 75,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 100 and install protective shields between customers and checkout clerks as soon as practicable.

Both retail food establishments and food processors must ensure 6' between employees. In many processing facilities this may not be possible without a reduction in the number of employees allowed to work. Lunch and breaks should be staggered to allow for adequate distancing. Retail stores should determine strategies to keep customers safely distanced at areas where customer lines typically form, such as deli counters, meat and seafood counters, and at registers. Installing a physical barrier (plexiglass) and/or the use of masks in areas where 6' social distancing is not possible is recommended.

On April 29, 2020, Governor Mills issued [Executive Order 49](#) FY 19/20 that requires individuals to wear face cloths in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Public settings include indoor spaces that are accessible to the public such as grocery stores, retail stores, and outdoor spaces such as busy parking lots and lines for take-out service. However, cloth face coverings are not required for anyone who has trouble breathing or related medical conditions, or who is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Hand Hygiene

Signage with handwashing procedures should be posted in prominent locations promoting hand hygiene.

- Regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
 - Before and after eating
 - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing
 - After touching face, hair, cell phone, and/or clothing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before handling food
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated
 - After using shared equipment and supplies
- Additional Retail handwashing considerations:
 - After handling boxes/cases delivered by vendor
 - After working in the retail area
 - After providing signature to delivery/vendor personnel

- Gloves recommended at register or hand sanitizer between transaction. Hand washing immediately upon leaving register for other duties or end of shift
 - Glove use recommended in all retail areas as reminder to staff not to touch their face
 - Wash hands before going on break or lunch
- Best practice – Provide hand sanitizer/wipes to customers as they enter store

Respiratory Hygiene

- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use
- **Employees who have symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.**
- Mask Use: Use of a mask for food establishment personnel provides a barrier between the individual and coronavirus droplets and/or aerosol. Personnel working in areas that are shared by the customer, or when 6' physical distancing is difficult to maintain should wear a mask to serve as a necessary barrier.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Individuals should use any protective equipment (i.e. gloves) as recommended on product labels. Carefully read and follow all label instructions for safe and effective use. Disinfectants should not be used on food contact surfaces unless those surfaces are washed/rinsed/sanitized after disinfecting. Sanitizing solutions may not be at a concentration that will provide disinfection to non-food contact surfaces and should not be used as a disinfectant without first reading the manufacturer's direction for use. Manufacturer may or may not include directions for use as a disinfectant. Employees should be trained to understand the difference between the sanitizing solution and disinfectant and the areas where each is used; sanitizing solution for food equipment/surfaces and disinfectant for non-food contact surfaces.

Step 1 – Cleaning: Always clean surfaces prior to use of disinfectants in order to reduce soil and remove germs. Dirt and other materials on surfaces can reduce the effectiveness of disinfectants. Wash surfaces using soap/detergent and water to reduce soil and remove germs.

Step 2 – Disinfection: Cleaning/washing of soiled areas must be completed prior to disinfection to ensure effectiveness.

Step 3 – Disposal: Place all used gloves and other disposable items in a bag that can be tied closed before disposing of them with other waste. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after removing gloves or use an alcohol-

based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly soiled.

Vendors

Vendors enter and work in retail establishments in varying degrees. Some vendors travel no further than the receiving dock while others deliver to walk-ins, stock areas, and work in retail areas. These vendors are in contact with a number of people in a number of establishments over the course of their day and should be considered at risk to coronavirus exposure. COVID 19 prevention strategies should extend to all vendors entering the facility; vendors should adhere to all practices expected of employees. It is recommended that all vendors wear a mask that adequately covers the nose and mouth, wash hands, use hand sanitizer and/or gloves while working a retail food store.

Take Out

Retail stores engaging in take-out operations as part of their business must have practices that maintain 6' social distancing. Adherence to Food Code personnel hygiene practices with the addition of wearing a mask can provide protection against the spread of the coronavirus during the food preparation operation. The point where order is taken should be shielded in the absence of 6' social distancing. The point where the order is delivered should be separate from the point of ordering to allow for greater social distancing by eliminating a bottle neck. The order can be left at the point of pick-up, the employee steps away, the customer is notified the order is ready and proceeds to the pick-up area to retrieve their order. Practices should be designed to prevent hand-to-hand contact with the customer if possible.

Example: An ice cream cone can be placed upside down in a plastic cup, delivered to the point of pick-up and left for the customer to retrieve once they are alerted to their order being ready. Adequate signage is needed to direct customers where to order, where to wait and how they will be alerted to their order being ready. Point of pick-up should be disinfected frequently with an approved disinfecting spray or wipe.

For more information:

Latest information about Maine's response to COVID-19 and available resources:
<https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/covid-19>

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 webpage:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>