



WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

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If a case is confirmed in the workplace, will the site be required to close for a period of time? How would we be expected to advise other employees at the location? Would everyone have to SQ?

The guidance available suggests that employers should let employees know that a case of Coronavirus has been confirmed in the workplace. It is a conservative approach to close the site.

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) should notify their supervisor and stay home.
- Sick employees should follow [CDC-recommended steps](#). Employees should not return to work until the criteria to [discontinue home isolation](#) are met, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and follow [CDC recommended precautions](#).



Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work:

- See [OSHA COVID-19](#) webpage for more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures and [guidance for employerspdf icon](#), including steps to take for jobs according to exposure risk.
- Be aware that some employees may be at [higher risk for serious illness](#), such as [older adults](#) and those with chronic medical conditions. Consider minimizing face-to-face contact between these employees or assign work tasks that allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from other workers, customers and visitors, or to telework if possible.

Separate sick employees:

- Employees who appear to have [symptoms](#) (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The employer should instruct fellow employees about how to proceed based on the CDC [Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure](#).

When should the employer send an employee home if he or she is not willing to do so?

According to the CDC, an adult has a fever when their temperature reaches 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Even though an employee may not want to go home, an employer might still require they do so when showing symptoms.

What steps do I need to take to ensure that the foods I produce are safe?

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 by food. Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.



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. Sick employees should follow the CDC's What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Employers should consult with the local health department for additional guidance. www.cdc.gov

While the primary responsibility in this instance is to take appropriate actions to protect other workers and people who might have come in contact with the ill employee, facilities should re-double their cleaning and sanitation efforts to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. For example, facilities are required to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces.

See FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/fsma-final-rule-preventive-controls-human-food>

Food facilities are required to use EPA-registered "sanitizer" products in their cleaning and sanitizing practices.

In addition, there is a list of EPA-registered "disinfectant" products for COVID-19 on the Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list that have qualified under EPA's emerging viral pathogen program for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. x

IMPORTANT: Check the product label guidelines for if and where these disinfectant products are safe and recommended for use in food manufacturing areas or food establishments. *AMI member chemical suppliers strongly recommend SaniDate 5.0. Call your supplier.*

Do I need to recall food products produced in the facility during the time that the worker was potentially shedding virus while working?

We do not anticipate that food products would need to be recalled or be withdrawn from the market because of COVID-19, as there is currently no evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food or food packaging.

Additionally, facilities are required to control any risks that might be associated with workers who are ill regardless of the type of virus or bacteria. For example, facilities are required to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces.

If a worker in my food processing facility/farm has tested positive for COVID-19, Should I close the facility? If so, for how long?

Food facilities need to follow protocols set by local and state health departments, which may vary depending on the amount of community spread of COVID-19 in a given area. These decisions will be based on public health risk of person-to-person transmission — not based on food safety.



How do I handle self-service food buffets such as salad bars in a retail setting related to COVID-19?

Restaurants and retail food establishments are regulated at the state and local level. State, local, and tribal regulators use the Food Code published by the FDA to develop or update their own food safety rules. Again, there is no current evidence to support the transmission of COVID-19 associated with food or food packaging.

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. The coronavirus is mostly spread from one person to another through respiratory droplets. However, it's always critical to follow the four key steps of food safety — clean, separate, cook, and chill — to prevent foodborne illness.

As an extra precaution to help avoid the transmission of COVID-19 through surface contact, we recommend frequent washing and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces and utensils. Food-service workers also must practice frequent hand washing and glove changes before and after preparing food. Include frequent cleaning and sanitizing of counters and condiment containers. Consumers should wash their hands after using serving utensils.

In communities with sustained transmission of COVID-19, state and local health authorities have implemented social-distancing measures which discourage or prohibit dining in congregated settings. We also recommend discontinuing self-service buffets and salad bars until these measures are lifted.

Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.

What steps do I need to take to clean the facility/equipment to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) and many have food safety plans that include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls. CGMPs and food safety plans have requirements for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See the FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food.

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We encourage coordination with local health officials for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside.

Food facilities may want to consider a more frequent cleaning schedule.

Do I need to ask other workers who may have been exposed to a worker who tested positive for COVID-19 to self-quarantine for 14 days?

Employers need to follow guidelines set by state and local authorities. 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. Sick employees should follow the CDC's What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Employers should consult with the local health department for additional guidance.

What measures are FDA (and CDC, state partners, etc.) taking to ensure that we remain able to address foodborne illness outbreaks during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Unlike foodborne gastrointestinal (GI) viruses like norovirus and hepatitis A that often make people ill through contaminated food, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, is a virus that causes respiratory, not gastrointestinal, illness. Foodborne exposure to this virus is not known to be a route of transmission.