

COVID-19 Tips for Food Processors

Employers must:

- Make sure workers know about the virus and how to minimize its overall spread.
- Set a clear policy for what is expected of your workers if they get sick, have the symptoms, or if an exposure is being reported.
- Do everything reasonably possible under the circumstances to protect the health and safety of workers by providing adequate information, training, key sanitation protocols, and personal protective equipment.
- Provide reminders and updates about COVID-19 prevention, signs and symptoms.
- Adjust company production and schedules to reflect any necessary changes.
- Make sure your workers are trained to work safely before replacing the duties of others.

Workers must:

- Practice physical distancing by working more than 2 metres (**6 feet**) apart from the other co-workers whenever possible.
- Continue to follow all safe work procedures. If felt unsafe to work, they should talk to their supervisor, the health and safety committee or representative, and/or their union rep.
- Stay home if they are sick or **might be sick**. Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
- Follow all hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette (elbow) and avoid touching their face.
- Wash their hands at the start of their shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, after handling cash, and before leaving their worksite. Remove all jewelry while washing hands.
- Do Not share cigarettes or vaping equipment.
- Do Not share communication devices or personal protective equipment **unless they can be cleaned** between users.
- Be aware of early signs and symptoms of acute respiratory infection.

Sanitation

A touch point is **any** surface that can be touched by bare hands by multiple people multiple times. While it's always critical to follow the four key steps of food safety – **clean, separate, cook, and chill** – to prevent foodborne illness, **employers should also**:

- Make sure that any person required to clean has received the appropriate, specific training* plus any required personal protective equipment to clean safely.
- Use an approved chemical disinfectant or bleach solution to destroy or inactivate the virus.
- If household or commercial disinfectant cleaning products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water. Make sure the solution is in contact with the surface for **1 minute**.



- If liquids can be withheld, disinfect high-touch electronic devices (keyboards, tablets, smart boards) with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Clean so that when the surface is wiped, the surface still appears wet.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment for use with any cleaning agents.
- Use a dedicated cloth for such cleaning.
- Create a checklist of all surfaces that **must be cleaned**, including door and sink handles, paper towel dispensers, counter tops, wheelchair access buttons, turnstiles, kitchen equipment, elevator buttons, vending machines, and printers/photocopiers.
- Clean **all areas** - including offices, cafeterias, change rooms, washrooms, and laundry rooms.
- Determine the frequency of cleaning and disinfection based on your organization's needs. Clean at least once per day but more frequent cleaning (**every 2 to 3 hours**) may be necessary.
- Record when cleaning and disinfection has occurred, maintain such records*. (*Training)

Disinfectants

- Clean visibly dirty or soiled surfaces with soap and water before properly disinfecting.
- Apply the disinfectant to a clean and dry cloth. Saturate the cloth before treating touch points. Reapply as needed.
- Apply enough disinfectant to leave a visible film on the surface.
- Allow the surface to air dry. This action allows the **1 minute** of contact time needed to be effective.
- Reapply disinfectant to the cloth between surfaces.
- Change the cloth daily or when it becomes visibly soiled.
- Test surfaces before using a bleach solution. Bleach can be corrosive.

Physical Distancing

- As much as possible, maintain a distance of at least 2 metres from others within the facility.
- Evaluate if changes can be made to increase worker separation, **including the use of barriers**.
- Stagger operational shifts to minimize the number of workers in one place, ie: lunchroom.
- Use deli tissue, spatulas, tongs, single use gloves, or dispensing equipment where possible.
- Control foot traffic patterns to reduce gathering at meeting points, washrooms, and other shared or common spaces.
- Designate travel paths so workers do not have to pass each other closely (ie: one set of stairs for up, another for down) or have workers call out before entering into such shared spaces.

General Site Management

- Notify all workers in advance if there are changes to screening measures and/or facility entrance policies and protocols.
- Make sure washrooms are **cleaned frequently**, have running water, and are stocked with soap, paper towels, and plastic lined waste containers. Visibly dirty hands **must** be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



- Stagger meetings, scheduled breaks, team talks, and orientations to minimize the number of workers in one particular place.
- Hold in-person meetings outdoors or in large areas that will allow for proper physical distancing.
- Communicate corporate information electronically, **or** wash hands after handling any papers.
- Hold worker orientations verbally to avoid touching any papers.
- Minimize contact during sign-in. Have the supervisor sign in for people (or provide separate pens), or have people text the supervisor. **Clean any sign-in devices between users.**
- Submit documents and forms electronically, **or** wash hands after handling any papers.
- Remove shared cutlery, other utensils and tableware from lunchrooms.
- Remove communal coat check areas and **shared** footwear or clothing. Have workers store their personal items in separate lockers or in sealed bins/bags. Provide designated uniforms that are laundered by a service **or** encourage workers to wear clothes that can be **washed frequently**.
- **Dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in a plastic lined waste container.**



Provide mental health support to all workers, including access to company's employee assistance program (EAP) if available.

~

This tip sheet was developed with the assistance of Maple Leaf Foods and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

For further information on COVID-19, please refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during the pandemic. Adjust this list by adding your own safe work practices and policies to meet your organization's key specific needs.