

Best Practices for School Food Service Providing Meals During the Response to COVID-19

To reduce the chance of spreading COVID-19, Governor Whitmer has ordered K-12 public schools in Michigan closed to in-person instruction for the remainder of this 2019-2020 school year. Many children in our state depend on the school setting for their meals, and the Governor's Executive Order 2020-35 notes the importance of the continuation of the provision of nutritious meals to children.

The following guidelines are intended to:

- help school nutrition and transportation personnel make informed decisions about COVID-19
- minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure to staff
- minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure to children and families receiving meals
- assist school districts and community partners as they continue to operate essential nutrition services for children and families

Note: These are suggested best practices and are not intended to take the place of any World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or other local or state guidelines and executive orders that would supersede these suggestions.

Screen Staff and Volunteers Reporting to Work

Note: Older adults and people who have severe underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 illness. ([CDC](#))ⁱ

- Screen staff and volunteers each time they report to work.
 - Several counties have already developed checklists. Refer to your county staff screening checklist or refer to the [Oakland County checklist](#).ⁱⁱ
- Only healthy individuals should be preparing, packaging, or touching food. If someone is ill or feels sick, they should go home immediately.
- Ask if staff are wearing freshly laundered clothing (clothing not worn anywhere else.)
- Assign volunteers without any food safety training to non-prep areas, such as bagging station, delivery of meals to distribution point, or other areas.

Routine Cleaning

- Clean and Sanitize Food Contact Surfaces per Food Code Requirements
Quaternary ammonia (Quat) and sodium hypochlorite (bleach) are most commonly used in food service operations. Follow label instructions for sanitizing food contact surfaces, utensils, and dishes. Refer to 2009 Michigan Modified Food Code Sections 4-501.114 and 4-602.11 for further guidance.

- Frequently clean and disinfect non-food contact surfaces with an [EPA approved](#)ⁱⁱⁱ disinfectant solution.
- Check with the district's chemical supplier if there are any questions about products being used.

Personal Hygiene

Make sure the following items are available for staff:

- Handwashing sinks with soap and single-use paper towels or hand dryer.
- Proper waste receptacles.
- Alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Disposable gloves.
- Aprons.
 - Single use aprons should be used if laundering service is not available.
- Masks are not required for individuals who are not sick.
 - If staff choose to wear masks, they should be instructed to wear them properly and masks should be single use only. Do not wear medical grade masks, as those are needed for healthcare providers. For more information on when and how to use masks, go to [WHO](#)^{iv}.
 - As of April 6, 2020, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends that Michiganders wear a face covering when outside of their home. For more information on the use of face covering for essential workers and to stay up to date, please visit [MDHHS guidance](#).

Practice Social Distancing During Food Preparation

- Limit number of staff in the food preparation areas to make sure they are working at least 6 feet apart.
- Make sure all prep stations, work areas, carts, and tables are 6 feet apart.
- Consider limiting the number of days that food is prepped and bagged to minimize exposure to others.

Practice Social Distancing During Food Pick-up

- Serve meals outdoors or at the entrance of a building.
- Use traffic cones or tape to space people 6 feet apart.
- Ask those who are using drive-by pick-ups to pop their trunk or open their own car door so staff can load meals into trunk.
 - For vans, trucks, or other vehicles without a trunk, request the driver to leave their vehicle and take the number of meals they need from a table or cart located curbside all while maintaining 6 feet distance.

Practice Social Distancing During Food Deliveries

- Delivery drivers must follow employee health guidance for food service workers.
- Delivery drivers should limit direct contact with staff receiving deliveries and continue to practice social distancing.

Post-Work Practices

- Wash hands before leaving worksite.
- Wash hands when arriving home.
- Separate/segregate clothing worn in food service area and wash as usual.
- As an extra precaution, shower or bathe when returning home.

RESOURCES

- [COVID Food Safety Recommendations^v](#)
- [NEHA Food Service FAQ^{vi}](#) for food safety regulators
- [Personal Protective Equipment^{vii}](#) from the CDC explains who needs PPE and who does not
- [School Food Service Safety Precautions^{viii}](#) basics for COVID-19 School Nutrition Programs
- [Staff Screening Checklist^{ix}](#) from Oakland County Health Department
- [Using Masks from World Health Organization^x](#) includes videos and infographics
- [MDHHS recommendations for face covering](#)

ⁱ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.oakgov.com/covid/resources/PublishingImages/Pages/businesses/Staff%20Screening%20Checklist%20for%20Businesses.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

^v https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/Face_Coverings_Guidance_for_non-healthcare_workers_Final_685949_7.pdf

^{vi} https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/COVID_Food_Safety_Recommendations_684831_7.pdf

^{vii} https://www.neha.org/sites/default/files/COVID-19-FAQs-Food-Safety-Regulators-March_20_2020.pdf

^{viii} <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html>

^{ix} <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html>

^x <https://www.oakgov.com/covid/resources/PublishingImages/Pages/businesses/Staff%20Screening%20Checklist%20for%20Businesses.pdf>

^{xi} <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>