

From FDA:

Workers Testing Positive

[What if a worker reports being in close contact with another worker on the job tested positive for COVID-19? \(Posted April 14, 2020\)](#)

Consult CDC's [Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#). It includes the following:

- **Pre-Screen:** Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work. Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility.
- **Regular Monitoring:** As long as the employee doesn't have a temperature or symptoms, they should self-monitor under the supervision of their employer's occupational health program.
- **Wear a Mask:** The employee should wear a face mask at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure. Employers can issue facemasks or can approve employees' supplied cloth face coverings in the event of shortages.
- **Social Distance:** The employee should maintain 6 feet and practice social distancing as work duties permit in the workplace.
- **Disinfect and Clean Work Spaces:** Routinely clean and disinfect areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.

Sick workers should follow the CDC's [Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick](#).

Additional Resources

The Food and Beverage Issues Alliance has developed [protocols](#)[External Link Disclaimer](#) for (1) when an employee of a firm is a confirmed or presumptive case of COVID-19 and (2) when a facility employee/facility visitor/customer has been in close contact with an individual with COVID-19. This protocol is specific to food manufacturing facilities, distribution centers, and wholesale and retail outlets.

[A worker in my food production/processing facility/farm has tested positive for COVID-19. What do I need to do to continue operations while protecting my other employees? \(Updated April 14, 2020\)](#)

All components of the food industry are considered critical infrastructure and it is vital for the public health that they continue to operate.

Instruct sick employees to stay home and to follow the CDC's [What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). [Clean and disinfect](#) surfaces in the employee's workspace. Inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality. Instruct employees who are well, but have been exposed to COVID-19, to notify their supervisor and follow CDC's Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19.

Federal Government Resources

Businesses should consult the CDC's [Interim Guidance for Business and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#), which is frequently updated.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) also issued [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) that includes information on how a COVID-19 outbreak could affect workplaces and steps all employers can take to reduce workers' risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

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If a worker in my food processing facility has tested positive for COVID-19, should I test the environment for the SARS-CoV-2 virus? (Posted March 27, 2020)

Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, we do not believe there is a need to conduct environmental testing in food settings for the virus that causes COVID 19 for the purpose of food safety. Cleaning and sanitizing the surfaces is a better use of resources than testing to see if the virus is present.

Facilities are required to use personnel practices that protect against contamination of food, food contact surfaces and packaging and to maintain clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. Although it is possible that the infected worker may have touched surfaces in your facility, FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs). Maintaining CGMPs in the facility should minimize the potential for surface contamination and eliminate contamination when it occurs. With the detection of the coronavirus in asymptomatic people and studies showing survival of coronavirus on surfaces for short periods of time, as an extra precaution, food facilities may want to consider a more frequent cleaning and sanitation schedule for high human contact surfaces.

A worker in my food processing facility/farm has tested positive for COVID-19. What steps do I need to take to ensure that the foods I produce are safe? (Posted March 17, 2020)

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.

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](#).

- 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.;
- 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

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? (Posted March 17, 2020)

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.

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? (Posted March 17, 2020)

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.