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Convenience Stores: COVID-19 Guidelines Reset

The following guidelines of good retail practices apply convenience stores operating during COVID-19. Operators must follow all local requirements and guidance from a higher authority. Working with your local Preventive Medicine and Veterinary Service personnel is essential to ensure safe operation.

The provided guidance serves as a blueprint for ensuring a safe experience for workers and their customers. Good general retail practices in response to COVID-19 mitigation in are:

- Heightened employee personal hygiene.
- Close monitoring of employee health.
- Avoid cross-contamination.
- Ensuring proper cooking temperatures.
- Enhanced sanitation.
- Constant monitoring by a properly trained person in charge.

References

COVID-19 military resources are available through the following military public health websites:

- [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#)
- [Foodservice Facilities: Reopening/Reset Guidelines](#)
- [Army Public Health Center](#)
- [Army Veterinary Services in milSuite](#)
<https://www.milsuite.mil/book/community/spaces/armyveterinaryservices/one-health/emergent-health-events>.
- Tri-Service Food Code [Navy] Tri-Service Food Code, TB MED 530/NAVMED P-5010-1/AFMAN 48-147_IP, 01 March 2019,
- [FDA, Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)
- [USDA Coronavirus](#)
- [National Restaurant Association](#)
- [OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)



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EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Employers: In preparation for reopening, operators should review all food service safety requirements outlined in the **Tri-Service Food Code (TSFC)** in addition to the following actions.

- Ensure designated food service supervisors (person-in-charge) are trained on specific health, hygiene, sanitation, and social distancing practices for COVID-19 and possess an unexpired Food Safety Manager (FSM) certification. A certified FSM **must remain on the premises during all operating hours.**
- Contact your supporting Preventive Medicine authority for guidance on how to operate safely under the HPCON level for your installation. Enhanced cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting guidance is provided at <https://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/Pages/archived-resources.aspx> when operating at HPCON Level Charlie or Delta.
- Prescreen employees daily for COVID-19 illness or recent exposure to a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 positive individual within the past 14 days. Exclude these workers until they have quarantined for at least 14 days and/or have been medically cleared.
 - Implement the **Conditional Employee or Food Employee Reporting Agreement** (Reporting requirements for food employees are outlined in Chapter 2, TSFC), DD Form 2971, NOV 2013.
 - Symptoms related to COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, two or more of the following: fever (100.4°F/38°C), chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell.
- Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment and supplies for cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and hand hygiene are readily available for employees and customers as recommended in this document.
- Provide a list of reportable symptoms, illnesses, and conditions of potential exposure to communicable diseases as outlined in the **TSFC, provision 2-201.11**, and as indicated above (under “Employers”), for COVID-19 in an area where it is readily available for all food employees to see.
- Where possible, reconfigure workstations so employees avoid standing directly opposite one another or next to each other. Where six feet of separation is not possible, consider other options (e.g., face coverings) and increase the frequency of surface cleaning and sanitizing.
- Train employees on new or modified procedures that have been established for operating under the designated COVID-19 HPCON Level. Training should include—
 - Reportable symptoms, illnesses, and exposures.
 - The importance of frequent and proper handwashing (20 seconds).
 - Proper use of hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizers may not be substituted for proper handwashing when preparing food.
 - Avoidance of touching hands to face as an added measure to prevent the spread of coronavirus after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
 - Enhanced cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection procedures and appropriate application of sanitizers and disinfectants.
 - Proper use of personal protective equipment such as face coverings and disposable gloves.
 - Social distancing procedures to be implemented at the facility.



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IN-STORE CHANGES

The following are in-store recommendations for employee and customer safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Operators must apply appropriate modifications to promote social distancing and minimize the potential for disease transmission from self-service food activities. Modifications include, but are not limited to the following considerations—

- Consider one-direction aisles.
- Employ enhanced sanitation measures as detailed in the guidelines.
https://phc.amedd.army.mil/PHC%20Resource%20Library/EnhancedSanitationPracticesforFoodEstablishmentsinResponsetoCOVID-19_FS_91-002-0320.pdf
- Do not allow customers to congregate.
- Provide spacing markers or signage on the floor and counters for customers to maintain appropriate distancing at ordering counters, service lines, and checkout registers.
- Use physical barriers such as partitions or Plexiglas barriers at registers.
- Remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers that you have internal distancing requirements.
- Make approved hand sanitizer readily available to guests. Consider touchless hand sanitizing solutions.
- Eliminate or modify customer self-service.
- Maximize service of prepackaged food and beverages in place of bulk dispensed items.
- Recommend under HPCON Charlie or Delta to discontinue the use of customer self-serve equipment (e.g. soda dispensers, self-serve bars, soup kettles). Beverage dispensers are allowed.
- **Do not install** guards or shields for dispensing nozzle protection if such installation impedes proper and frequent equipment cleaning and sanitizing according to the TSFC. Guards/shields must be easily removed or designed and installed to allow easy removal and reattachment of dispensing nozzles and to allow access when cleaning soiled surfaces of the beverage dispenser and shield.
- Discontinue the use of fresh condiment bar should be replaced with pre-packaged condiments.
 - Packets and single-use items (stirrers, disposable utensils) must be protected from contaminations and dispensed in a fashion to limit customer handling.
- Strongly urge all open-air, self-serve fresh food items to be clerk-served.
- Recommend fresh baked goods are sold pre-packaged.
- Discontinued the use of personal cups for hot and cold dispensed beverages until further notice.
- Place signage encouraging the use of provided napkins when touching dispensing panels and coffee dispensing handles.
- Place approved hand sanitizer for convenient access at self-service beverage stations.
- Recommend wiping with an approved disinfectant all high touch customer surface. (e.g. service counters, beverage panels, coffee dispensing handles, door handles, credit card panels, gasoline nozzle handles) every hour or sooner.
- For facilities linked to an employee or patron who has tested positive for COVID-19 immediately contact your Preventive Medicine authority for current DOD and CDC policies. Follow enhance cleaning and disinfection guidance.
- Signage reminding customers of some of these safety measures is encouraged.



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CLEANING, SANITIZING, & DISINFECTION

All cleaning and sanitizing requirements as required by the TSFC remain in effect. Please review the requirements with all food service workers and ensure they are properly executed during all operating hours. Before opening the facility must be thoroughly cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected in accordance with the TSFC and this guidance. Focus on high-contact touch areas that would be touched by employees and customers. It is strongly recommended discontinuing the use of customer self-serve beverage machines until further notice.

Understand the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing. The CDC defines as follows: Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead. Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant. Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time (e.g., letting it stand for 3-5 minutes).

Using disinfecting wipes is acceptable however, pay close attention to the directions for using them. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time.

Ensure you always have sufficient cleaning and disinfection product on hand. Including hand sanitizer, hand soap, paper towels, toilet paper, and disinfectant wipes.

- Follow cleaning and sanitizing requirements, material, and strength as described in the TSFC to ensure its efficacy to protect surfaces.
- Avoid all possible food contamination when cleaning and sanitizing.
- All warewashing equipment can meet temperature and/or sanitizer final rinse requirements as per the [TSFC](#). Always have sufficient warewashing detergent and approved chemical sanitizer if applicable as prescribed in the TSFC.
- Wash and sanitizing foodservice equipment in the kitchen area when contaminated or at the end of each meal period.
- Strongly recommended that the foodservice facility used approved sanitizer as prescribed in the TSFC.
- The following is an example of typical sanitizers that can be used and the normal strength to achieve sufficient efficacy in the removal of bacteria and viruses.
 - Chlorine bleach sanitizing solution with a minimum concentration of 100 parts per million free available chlorine with a maximum of 200 parts per million. To be effective the



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product must remain **WET** on the surface for a minimum of 1-minute to allow proper sanitization.

- Quaternary ammonium compounds (or QUATS) are prepared according to the manufacturer's label. Wet contact time to achieve proper sanitizing will vary by product; follow the manufacturer's label.

Disinfection: Disinfection procedures detailed below are enhanced sanitation procedures in response to COVID-19.

- Disinfection procedures are recommended if a foodservice operation has been closed for an extended period for any reason. An extended period is considered 30 days or if closed for any period following an employee(s) having a confirmed case of COVID-19. Please collaborate with the local Preventive Medicine personnel for detailed guidance.
- Disinfect all nonporous high touch **non-food surface** equipment in **kitchens areas** include frequently touched areas such as door handles at the end of each meal period.
- Disinfect high touch surfaces in **customer areas** after each meal period or every 2-3 hours.
 - Examples: Refrigerated food display cases, condiment bottles, and dispensers, napkin holders, bulk food dispensers (i.e., lids, handles).
 - Entrance, exit, and restroom door handles.
 - Dining room chairs (backrest and seat pan).
 - Tabletops.
 - Service counters, tray rails, dining tables, credit card machines (keypad, digital touchpad).
 - Restroom light switches, handicap rails, hand wash sink fixtures, soap dispensing levers, paper towel dispensing levers, forced air hand drying control button, and door latches for toilet stalls.
- Proper safety precautions must be observed when using disinfection products. Use U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfecting products disinfectants to nonporous surfaces that are not classified as food equipment.
 - Prepare chlorine bleach disinfecting solution with a minimum concentration of 1,000 parts per million free available chlorine, with a minimum of 1-minute wet contact time required to achieve adequate disinfection.
 - For alternate disinfecting products, refer to the [EPA-registered disinfectants](#). Always refer to label instruction for proper contact time to achieve an adequate level of disinfection will vary by product and for safe use.



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If using a bleach solution to sanitize or disinfect follow formulation provided below. Use caution and ensure employees have and utilize proper protective equipment when mixing or using chemicals.

| Concentration | Bleach with 5 to 6% Sodium Hypochlorite | Bleach with 8.25% Sodium Hypochlorite |
|---------------|---|--|
| 100-200 ppm | ½ Tablespoon bleach per 1 gallon of water | 1 teaspoon bleach per 1 gallon of water |
| 1,000 ppm | 1/3 cup bleach per 1 gallon of water | 3 Tablespoons bleach per 1 gallon of water |

WHEN MIXING BLEACH SOLUTIONS ALWAYS ADHERE TO ALL SAFETY PROCEDURE INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO GOOD VENTILATION, AND PROPER PROTECTIVE GEAR (GLOVES, MASKS, GOGGLES)