



**General Hygiene, Social Distancing and Food Waste Guidance  
TAKE-OUT RESTAURANTS and FOOD MARKETS  
March 18, 2020**

- **SICK EMPLOYEES NEED TO STAY HOME.** No worker should be allowed to enter the restaurant, at any time, if they have symptoms of body ache, fever, cough or nausea. Health status of employees should be established before they show up for work.
- **CUSTOMERS SHOULD ORDER & PAY ONLINE OR USE DELIVERY.** Delivery services should be used to avoid people coming into the market or restaurant. Customers should be asked to place orders and pay online if that option is available. If feasible, this guidance should be added to the establishment website so customers know this ahead of time.
- **AT THE COUNTER.** Social Distancing should be observed during food pick-up or grocery check-out.
  - Recommended 6-foot separation is usually not feasible, so be considerate by ***speaking softly with head turned*** (less projection of droplets) and ***breathe through nose, not mouth.***
  - ***No unnecessary conversation*** (a smile goes a long way). This is not rude and it will make a difference in reducing transmission risk.
- **EMPLOYEE HYGIENE PRACTICES.** People can transmit COVID-19 to others before they have any symptoms, so the precautions below are essential for all employees at work, even if they are not symptomatic with flu-like illness:
  - Employees should make every effort to ***avoid coughing or sneezing anywhere inside*** the establishment (even if not related to viral illness). If unavoidable, please ***use inner elbow to fully cover mouth.***
  - All employees should wear disposable gloves if they are handling consumer goods, food packages, cash or credit cards. Wash hands, including between fingers, wrists, and forearms thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, ***before*** putting on gloves and after taking them off.
  - After putting on the gloves, employees should ***never*** touch their face or hair. This is very important because this is one way in which COVID-19 spreads easily between people and onto objects.
  - ***While wearing the gloves*** during the day, wash with soap and water every 30 minutes to kill any virus that might have come from surfaces or objects. Sanitizer is good, but not as effective as soap and water.
- **HAIR NETS FOR ALL FOOD PREP.** As required under the Massachusetts Food Code, all employees working with prepared food should wear hair nets. This is ***already required***, but it matters more than ever.



- **MASKS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR STAFF DEALING DIRECTLY WITH CUSTOMERS AT COUNTERS AND CHECK-OUTS OR ELSEWHERE**

Individuals will make their own decisions, but the appropriate and task-specific use of masks is useful for those who cannot maintain a 6 foot buffer from others. **BUT PLEASE REMEMBER: Personal hygiene and distancing behavior is what people should be thinking about foremost and always. Masks are not a substitute for these precautions.**

- **DURING FOOD PICK-UP & DELIVERY**

- Take away food containers and bags should never be touched with unwashed hands. Treat the containers as critical high-touch surfaces.
- Food delivery should be done with similar precautions, so drivers should frequently sanitize car-door handles, steering wheels and wash or sanitize hands or gloves as soon as possible after touching any public surface.
- During delivery, do not meet customers face to face. Instead, **leave food at their door** for them to retrieve.

- **REFER TO SURFACE HYGIENE GUIDANCE PROVIDED BY PUBLIC HEALTH**

Identify and frequently clean all “high-touch” surfaces including:

- Payment and EBT machines and surrounding surfaces
- Scales
- Shared shopping carts or handbaskets
- Shared service counters and bagging area surfaces
- Farmers Market tokens
- Bulk bins and utensils (utensils should be washed regularly)
- Salad Bars, self-serve condiments, self-serve beverage dispensers sugar/creamer, etc. and utensils (wash on a schedule)
- Shared equipment like coffee grinders and peanut butter grinders
- Menus or lists on the ordering counter shared by customers

- **EVEN AFTER RECOVERY WORKERS SHOULD STAY HOME.** Workers presumed COVID-19+ should be self-isolated and not enter the store/establishment for at least 14 days after symptoms end. (People without symptoms can transmit the virus for 2-5 weeks after they have recovered).

- **FOOD WASTE GUIDANCE**

- **Check with your waste vendors** to determine that they will be able to pick up your establishment waste on schedule.
- If waste pick-up is delayed or interrupted, please make sure to **close waste receptacles and dumpsters as securely as possible.** We expect a major sanitation and pest problem if food waste sits for more than a few days.

If you have any questions about good hygiene practices during this pandemic please feel free to contact the Cambridge Public Health Department, **(617) 665-3648**