



Frequently Asked Questions for Food Establishment Owners Amid COVID-19 Outbreak

Information for Establishment Owners and Persons-in-Charge

The following information is intended to provide guidance on the management of coronavirus infection for food establishment/store managers.

1. **Q:** If our restaurant/establishment discovers that an employee or customer has tested positive for COVID-19 and has come into contact with our food establishment, would the restaurant/establishment need to close? What is the guidance for quarantining the employees for 14 days?

A: Yes, the store should close for cleaning and disinfecting. It is recommended to close and vacate the food establishment for at least 24 hours to allow the viral count to minimize to levels allowable for staff to return for cleaning and disinfecting. Information on how to clean and disinfect is available from the CDC and FDA:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html> or <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

2. **Q:** If our restaurant/establishment discovers that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19, would the confirmed case be the only one quarantined, or should all the employees and management in contact with that person be quarantined?

A: Employees who were exposed to a positive COVID-19 case should call the DPH Coronavirus Call Center at **1-866-408-1899**. DPH staff will advise managers/employees about quarantine. Of note – the precedent is set for 14-day isolation for the ill person and a 14-day quarantine for those exposed (all employees in contact with the ill person). To learn more about the difference between isolation and quarantine, visit <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/files/isolandquarpi.pdf>.

3. **Q:** Should our restaurant/establishment hire a cleaning crew to clean and disinfect our restaurant/establishment or could management and team members from another unaffected store coordinate with us to clean and disinfect our establishment using Ecolab approved chemicals?
4. **A:** There is no requirement to hire a cleaning crew, but the option is available to you and your business. Food establishments with a positive employee should contact DPH at 302-744-4736 or via email at dphcall@delaware.gov for information and guidance.

REVISED 3.19.2020



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Division of Public Health

The EPA's **Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2**, the virus that causes COVID-19, are listed here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.

Quaternary Ammonium Compound sanitizers used for food contact surfaces provided by Ecolab and other suppliers are not enough to combat this virus. The cleaning and disinfecting should be completed by following EPA and chemical manufacturer's recommendations, along with your company's standard operating procedures. Guidance from the CDC is available for how to safely clean and disinfect here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

A checklist with accompanying initials of the employee responsible for managing the cleaning process is ideal to ensure that the business is effectively disinfected. The protocol and checklist will be sufficient documentation if your business needs to illustrate the process to DPH.

5. **Q:** If our restaurant/establishment discovers that an employee has tested positive for COVID-19, is there a mandated number of days that the restaurant/establishment should stay closed? If all the employees were sent home for quarantine for 14 days and the restaurant was properly cleaned and disinfected, could unaffected managers and employees from another location come in to reopen the restaurant/establishment?

A: If a food establishment employee tests positive for COVID-19, the food establishment manager or operator should contact DPH at 302-744-4736 or via email at dphcall@delaware.gov for information and guidance. There is no mandated period for business closure. All recommendations by staff at the DPH Coronavirus call center and Community Environmental Health Services should be followed. Once the cleaning and disinfection of the business are complete, healthy food employees, and those who were not exposed to the ill food employee, may return to work.

6. **Q:** Will our restaurant/establishment need approval from DPH to reopen if the business activates measures such as the 14-day quarantine and closure to clean and disinfect after a member of our team or a customer is confirmed with COVID-19?

A: Unless DPH ordered the facility to close, there is no requirement to receive approval from DPH to reopen, as COVID-19 is not a Delaware Food Code regulated disease, and is not considered a foodborne illness. We are asking impacted food establishments to call the DPH Coronavirus Call Center to report food worker contact with an ill case.

For additional information and resources, visit [DE.gov/coronavirus](https://de.gov/coronavirus), call the DPH Coronavirus Call Center at 1-866-408-1899 or email DPHCall@delaware.gov
Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday 10 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

REVISED 3.19.2020