

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What Airport Retail or Food Service Workers Need to Know about COVID-19

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms often include a fever, cough or shortness of breath. Our understanding of how the virus spreads is evolving as we learn more about it, so check the [CDC website](#) for the latest information. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.

Recent studies indicate that the virus can be spread by people before they develop symptoms or who never develop symptoms. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. However, this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at [higher risk for more serious complications](#) from COVID-19.

[CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings](#) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Cloth face coverings may prevent people who don't know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. These face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators and are not appropriate substitutes for them in workplaces where masks or respirators are recommended or required.

As an airport retail or food service worker, how can I protect myself?

As an airport retail or food service worker, potential sources of exposure can occur while working in an airport store, bar, restaurant, or food concession stand if you are in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes after handling items used by someone with COVID-19.

- Limit close contact with others by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet, when possible.
- Minimize handling cash, credit cards, and mobile devices, where possible.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, cash registers, touch screens, door handles, tables, and countertops, following the directions on the cleaning product's label.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can be used, but not as a substitute for cleaning hands with soap and water.
- Key times to clean hands in general include:
 - Before, during, and after preparing food
 - Before eating food
 - After using the toilet
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Additional times to clean hands on the job include:
 - Before and after work shifts
 - Before and after work breaks
 - After touching frequently touched surfaces
 - After interacting with a customer who is visibly ill

- After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings
- After touching objects that have been handled by customers, such as utensils, menus, cups, and trash
- After touching dirty surfaces like floors, walls and soiled carriers and equipment
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

What steps should my employer take?




Your employer should have a COVID-19 health and safety plan to protect employees. This plan should be shared with you and your coworkers. Your employer should:

- Take [steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if an employee is sick](#). Actively encourage sick employees to stay home. Sick employees should not return to work until [the criteria to discontinue home isolation are met](#), in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
- Provide information on who to contact if employees become sick.
- Implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices. Consider drafting non-punitive emergency sick leave policies if sick leave is not offered to some or all employees.
- Institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees and customers such as:
 - Place signage throughout the store to remind employees and customers to maintain a distance of 6 feet from others.
 - Move the electronic payment terminal further from the cash register.
 - Place visual cues, such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand during check out.
 - Place a barrier (e.g., sneeze guard) between employees and customers.
- Designate someone to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Provide employees with accurate information about COVID-19, how it spreads, and risk of exposure.
- Provide training on proper [hand washing](#) practices and other routine infection control precautions. This will help prevent the spread of many diseases, including COVID-19.
- Provide employees with access to soap, clean running water, and drying materials, or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at their worksite.
- Provide disposable disinfectant wipes so that employees can wipe down commonly touched surfaces such as workstations, cash registers, door handles and knobs, countertops, self-service refrigerator/freezer doors and handles. For disinfection, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2](#) [🔗](#). Follow instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. For food contact surfaces, follow cleaning and sanitization practices according to the FDA 2017 Food Code.
- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal containers for employees.
- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of employee break rooms, rest areas, and other common areas.
- Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [covering coughs and sneezes](#), and [washing hands often](#) at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Follow all applicable local, state, and federal regulations and public health agency guidelines.

Where can I get more information?



Stay informed. Talk to your employer, supervisor, union representative, or airport personnel who are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. See these sources for more information on reducing the risk of worker exposures to COVID-19:

- [CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) website](#)
- [NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topic website](#)

- [CDC COVID-19 website](#)
- [OSHA COVID-19 website](#) 
- CDCINFO: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636 ) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348  | website: [cdc.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info)

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