



COVID-19 (novel coronavirus disease) and Animal Food/Feed Best Practices

The situation around COVID-19 (novel coronavirus disease) in Washington State continues to develop. To be clear, food and animal feed have not been identified as sources of COVID-19 infection.

This guidance is adapted from Washington Department of Health (DOH) information related to animal food establishments.

Current Recommendations

Follow current food safety standards to help protect workers and customers from COVID-19. Expanding your current safety practices can help slow disease in the community and help reduce working days lost due to illness.

Employee health policies should prohibit animal food workers who are sick from working in food establishments.

- Train your employees about symptoms to monitor, and how to notify you if they are sick and unable to work.
- Workers with the symptoms matching COVID-19 – as well as with family members of caregivers with symptoms -- should stay home.
- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19 include fever of 100.4°F or greater, cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.
- Food workers and managers who are ill should not return to work until at least 24 hours after symptoms are gone, unless directed otherwise by medical providers or local health authorities.
- Employers need not require employees to provide a doctor's note to return to work, so as not to burden the medical system.

All employees should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- Stock all handwashing station with soap, paper towels, and warm, running water.
- Do not allow employees to contact animal food with bare hands. Use gloves or other barriers when handling foods that will not be fully cooked.
- All employees should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If necessary, sneeze into a shirtsleeve, but NOT into hands. Discard tissues and wash hands immediately after each cough or sneeze.
- Employees should avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth. The current safety rule requires workers to wash their hands whenever they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.



- Consider providing tissues, no-touch waste bins, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer in customer areas.
- Remind employees to avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth to help slow the spread of germs. The current animal food safety rule requires workers to wash their hands as necessary and as appropriate, such as whenever they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- To help customers keep their germs to themselves, consider providing tissues, no-touch waste bins, and alcohol-based hand antiseptic rubs (with at least 60% ethyl alcohol as the active ingredient) in customer areas.

All commercial feed/food establishments, including pet food manufacturers, retailers and distributors, should follow cleaning and sanitizing recommendations.

- Use EPA-registered sanitizers and disinfectants labeled for use against the COVID-19. EPA will update the list as needed. If you have questions about a particular sanitizer, read the package label or contact your chemical provider.
- EPA recommends following the product label use directions for enveloped viruses. Use the longest contact time or most concentrated solution for viruses or virucidal activity. These may exceed levels allowed for food contact surfaces, such as equipment and utensils. Measure the concentration with test strips to make sure the active ingredient is available.
- Follow label directions for FOOD CONTACT SURFACES when using near or on utensils and food contact surfaces.
- All food contact surfaces such as utensils, cutting boards, and equipment must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized often throughout the day.
- Wash and rinse visible dirt or debris from equipment before sanitizing.
- All nonfood contact surfaces, such as outsides of equipment, counters, and doors should be cleaned of spills as needed. Wash, rinse, and sanitize nonfood contact surfaces that employees touch throughout the day.
- Consider removing papers and unneeded materials from counters to allow for thorough, unobstructed sanitization.



Clean and sanitize customer-access areas more frequently.

- Use a separate wiping cloth and sanitizing solution for customer-access areas.
- Sanitize “touchpoints” such as doorknobs, other handles, and areas near cash registers at least daily.
- Clean and sanitize tongs and other utensils in self-service areas often throughout the day.
- Consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer at your facility entrance.

Resources for more information

- Washington State Department of Health: doh.wa.gov/coronavirus
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/coronavirus (See specific groups; guidance for business and employers)
- FMI Food Industry Association: fmi.org/food-safety/coronavirus
- World Health Organization: who.int
- National Pesticide Information Center: npic.orst.edu