FOOD HYGIENE AND SAFETY FOR FOOD BUSINESSES DURING CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) PANDEMIC



FTI FOOD TECH PVT. LTD. MAY 2020

Coronaviruses (CoVs) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a spreading threat. The disease is spreading rapidly and the number of cases is rising in most of the countries including India.

The SARS-CoV-2 is a novel strain of coronavirus that was first detected in the city of Wuhan, in the province of Hubei, in the People's Republic of China – a city with a population of 11 million. The outbreak started as a pneumonia of unknown causal agent at the end of December 2019. Phylogenetics analyses undertaken with available full genome sequences suggest that bats appear to be the reservoir of COVID-19 virus, but the intermediate host(s) has not yet been identified.

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. The WHO recommended that the interim name of the disease causing the current outbreak should be 2019-nCoV acute respiratory disease. In the 2019-nCoV acronym, "2019" is the year the virus was first detected, "n" means "new", and "CoV" corresponds to the coronavirus family.

MODES OF TRANSMISSION

The virus does not appear to pass easily from person to person unless there is close contact, such as providing unprotected care to an infected patient. There have been clusters of cases in healthcare facilities, where human-to-human transmission appears to be more probable, especially when infection prevention and control practices are inadequate. This disease common symptoms such as fever, cough and shortness of breath.



The disease can present as asymptomatic to mild flu like symptoms to severe respiratory symptoms and in some cases even with gastrointestinal symptoms. Respiratory diseases in severe form can present as acute respiratory illness and pneumonia. Exact dynamics of spread is yet to be determined; however as evident it seems to spread by two types of modes of Transmissions which are as follows:

1) <u>Direct Transmission</u>: Directly by human to human transmission, through respiratory droplets when the person carrying the virus either sneezes, coughs; through close personal contact (including touching and shaking hands); or through touching your nose, mouth or eyes with contaminated hands.



Direct contact with infected person



Directly touching eyes/nose or mouth



Via droplets when infected person Cough/Sneeze

2) <u>Indirect Transmission</u>: Indirectly through contaminated surfaces that contain the virus.





Transmission by touching contaminated surface.

❖ Potential Transmission of COVID-19 via Food

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness and the primary transmission route is through person-to-person contact and through direct contact with respiratory droplets generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

There is no evidence to date of viruses that cause respiratory illnesses being transmitted via food or food packaging. Coronaviruses cannot multiply in food; they need an animal or human host to multiply.



There are three major steps to prevent spread of COVID-19 infections are:

- 1) Maintain high level of hygiene
- 2) Practice social distancing at all times
- 3) Cleaning and sanitation

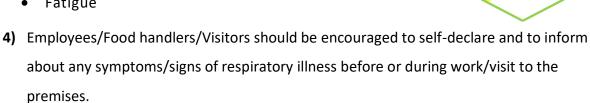
RESPONSIBILITY OF FOOD BUISINESS OPERATOR

Under the present circumstances due to COVID 19 pandemic, it is mandatory for all food businesses to implement Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), to ensure compliance with measures to protect food handlers from contracting COVID-19, to prevent exposure or transmission of the virus, and to strengthen the food hygiene and sanitation practices.

- 1) Food handlers/workers should be made aware about COVID-19 symptoms so that they are able to recognize the symptoms early and that they can seek appropriate medical care and testing.
- 2) Food workers should be provided with training on risk factors, safe food handling, social distancing and other protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and wearing of face mask, hand washing with soap or using of alcohol-based hand rubs) required amid COVID-19 infections.
- personnel entering the premises. All employees/workers/ visitors should be screened at entry point for symptoms of COVID-19 such as temperature (using non-contact type thermometer), cough, cold, etc. Those with temperature more than 37.5 °C (99 °F) and /or flu like symptoms shall not be allowed to enter establishments.

Some common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (high temperature -37.5 °C (99 °F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- **Breathing difficulties**
- Fatigue



5) In some cases, infected people may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic and may not display any signs or symptoms of disease or may present with mild symptoms that can be easily overlooked, employers therefore should ensure the availability of masks and protective gears to all food handlers.





Wear Mask

Social Distancing





Gloves

Gowns

- 6) Regular monitoring of the employees/food handlers is essential for prevention of COVID 19 spread with the food establishment.
- 7) A local emergency response team should be established in large food business to deal with suspected COVID-19 infections and one person should be designated as the COVID-19 coordinator. Their contact details should be shared with all employees. The team should develop protocols/guidelines on



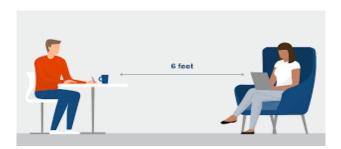
The following should be ensured:

- List of local authorized hospitals for COVID-19 testing and treatment.
- Contact details of professional disinfection company are kept handy.
- Adequate disinfectant for emergency use are available.
- Masks, Gloves, Safety Glasses, Protection suits for emergency use are procured & stored as per govt. advisories.
- Isolation rooms one for suspected cases, one for close contacts are prepared with special trash bins.
- A process for record keeping is established wherein all the related information (Attendance, health status of employee, visitor details) are maintained.

❖ PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing aims, through a variety of means.

- To minimise physical contact between individuals and thereby to reduce the possibility for new infections.
- A minimum distance of one meter shall be maintained between two persons at all points in a food establishment. &Limit the no. of people in contact on a production floor.
- Reduce the speed of production lines to reduce the no. of staff working on production line.
- Increase the time of shifts/scatter break periods to minimize staff interaction.



❖ PERSONNEL HYGIENE FOR FOOD HANDLERS

Proper hand hygiene: Washing with soap and water for at least 20 Sec. (Follow WHO advice)

Wash Your Hands



- Frequent use of alcohol based sanitizers & cleaning/ disinfection of work surfaces and touch points such as doors, handles.
- **Good Respiratory Hygiene:** cover mouth and nose with mask & Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness.



❖ CLEANING AND SANITATION

- Food premise shall be always well maintained and cleaned thoroughly and sanitized daily.
- Various areas of Food Establishment shall be cleaned with soap and water, followed by disinfection prepared 1 percent hypochlorite solution or any other disinfectant found to be effective against virus.



- Equipment, containers, utensils, cutlery, etc. should be cleaned thoroughly with soap and water.
- High touch points shall be cleaned twice in a day by disinfectant and in case of metallic surfaces like door handles, use 70 % alcohol.
- Toilets and washrooms after every shift using detergent.





STEPS OF CLEANING:

STEP -1 Preparation

- Remove loose dirt and food particles
- Rinse with warm, potable water.

STEP-2 Cleaning

- Wash with hot water (60 °C) and detergent.
- Rinse with clean potable water.

STEP-3 Sanitising

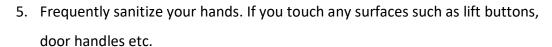
• Treat with very hot, clean, potable water (75°C) for at least 2 Mins.

STEP-4 Air drying

 Leave benches, counters and equipment to air dry. The most hygienic way to dry equipment is in a Draining Rack.

❖ WHEN YOU REACH AT OFFICE, FOLLOWING RULES KEEP IN MIND

- 1. Prefer stairways
- 2. If in lifts, maintain distance
- 3. Use elbow/ arms to open doors
- 4. Ensure office space, desktop surfaces etc. are sanitized.







instead of elevator



Ensure office space are sanitized



Open doors through elbow/ arms

THINGS TO BE REMEMBER IN OFFICE:

- 1. E- Meetings preferred
- 2. Conference room meetings, if at all, with distancing and minimum people.
- 3. Bring lunch from home, eat in your space, dispose responsibly
- 4. Avoid going to other floors.
- 5. Avoid going in and out of office premises, enter and exit once.



Maintain social distancing during Office Meeting



Eat in your space

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIFFERENT FOOD SECTORS.

1) FOOD WORKERS: TRANSPORT AND DELIVERY OF FOOD INGREDIENTS AND FOOD PRODUCTS

The primary focus of any additional hygiene and sanitation measures implemented by food businesses is on keeping the COVID-19 virus out of their businesses. The virus will enter business premises only when an infected person enters or contaminated products or items are brought into the premises.



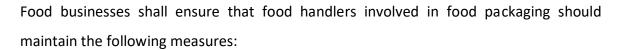


- Drivers should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before passing delivery documents to food premises staff. Disposable containers and packaging should be used to avoid the need for cleaning of any returns.
- In the case of reusable containers, appropriate hygiene and sanitation protocols should be implemented.
- Drivers delivering to food premises should be aware of the potential risks involved in contact transmission of COVID-19, like frequent touch surfaces such as steering wheels, door handles, mobile devices, etc.
- Drivers need to be aware of physical distancing when picking up deliveries and passing deliveries to customers and of the need to maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness and to wear clean protective clothing.
- Drivers also need to be aware of the need to ensure that all transport containers are kept clean and frequently disinfected, foods must be protected from contamination, and must be separated from other goods that may cause contamination.

2) FOOD PACKAGING

Survival of COVID-19 virus on different surfaces

- This virus remain viable for up to 72hrs. on plastic and stainless steel
- Up to four hrs. on copper



- High level of personal hygiene
- Social distancing.
- use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- disinfection of work surfaces
- All measures shall be adopted to ensure that food packaging is kept clean and away from sources of contamination.





❖ CAN BE THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED THROUGH FOOD?





- There is currently no evidence to date that the SARS-CoV-2 is spread through food, as of now.
- Coronaviruses cannot grow (multiply) in food they need a host (animal or human)
 for this to happen.
- Coronaviruses spread most commonly people to people or animal to people via droplet spread by a sneeze or cough. If droplets contact mucus membrane (mouth, nose, eyes) of another person either directly or indirectly (by touching a contaminated surface) it can lead to infection.
- Research with similar viruses (SARS) has demonstrated that typical cooking temperatures (30 minutes at 140°) will kill the virus in foods.

Bottom line: Cooking food and observing good hygiene practices, when handling and preparing food are effective at preventing contamination of the novel Coronavirus.

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