

COVID-19 Food Service Health and Safety FAQs

The below FAQ were compiled from the field by the Agency of Education, with responses provided by the Vermont Department of Health. Please also review the [COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses](#) issued by the Vermont Department of Health.

1. Is it a requirement that if we are delivering food we need masks? If so, where do we get masks?

On April 21, 2020 guidance was released related to the use of face masks and coverings in businesses. [New guidelines from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development](#) requires foodservice personnel to wear non-medical cloth face coverings when preparing, packaging, serving or delivering food.

Please also consider reading the Health Department's [Health & Safety Tips for Essential Businesses](#). This advice is based on new data about how COVID-19 can spread before a person has any symptoms. A mask helps protect others around you in the case you are infected and not showing any signs or symptoms. A face covering is one more important precaution we can take to help slow the spread of COVID-19. However, it is not a substitute for physical distancing and other prevention measures. Employees still need to stay at least 6 feet away from people, even when wearing face coverings. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those types of masks are critical supplies that must be reserved for our health care workers and first responders. For more information, please consult the [Vermont Department of Health Fact Sheet on Face Masks and Coverings](#).

Employers and employees have a few options to obtain facial masks and coverings. The Centers for Disease Control has instructions on [making your own coverings](#) in several different methods, including machine or hand-sewn, a no-sew method with a t-shirt and scissors, and a no-sew method with a bandanna. Facial coverings and masks can also be purchased. To find a list of places where facial coverings, please review the [Face Covering Guidance and Where to Buy](#). Lastly, Programs can reach out to the community. Check out places like Front Porch Forum to connect with other Vermonters making masks. These masks and coverings are allowable costs to the federal Child Nutrition Programs.



2. **We're doing curbside pickup at all schools, available to any child 18 and under. Should we be getting name and contact for the person picking up? Just in case down the road, if we have one of our workers get sick, we could know who they came in contact with?**

This is not necessary, due to the numbers of people involved in picking up their foods and the existing state of general community spread of COVID- 19.

3. **What happens if someone in kitchen gets sick, and they test positive?**

Please see the "Employees with COVID-19" section of the [COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses](#) from the Vermont Department of Health for more on how to handle this situation.

- **Do we need to close the kitchen?**

No, the kitchen does not need to be closed.

- **How do we clean the kitchen?**

Please consult information in the following links:

- Food and Drug Administration: [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- Centers for Disease Control: [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- Vermont Department of Health: [COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses](#)
- **Do we need to throw away the food?**
Use your usual procedures for handling food and food disposal.
- **Do we need to notify the families who have received food?**
You do not need to notify families. According to the CDC, [currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food.](#)

4. **If a food distribution employee gets the virus, do we need to notify the families?**

No, you do not need to notify the families.

5. **Our district is distributing by van, with two employees in the van (one to drive, one to hand out meals, call families, and provide directions). How can we ensure our staff can distribute the meals and stay safe? Logistically, two people are needed to do the distribution.**

Set up innovative solutions to keep a 6' distance as much as possible. Having the passenger sit in the back seat is a creative solution. Other suggestions for maintaining physical distance are included in guidance previously issued by the Vermont Agency of Education. Please see the pages 6-8 of [Guidance on Non-Congregate Feeding During School Closure or Dismissal due to a Novel Coronavirus Outbreak](#) and Question 11 of [School Nutrition Programs COVID-19 FAQ: Volume 1](#) for other suggestions on maintaining 6' distance during preparation and distribution activities.