

# HACCP-Based Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

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## SOP 25 – Viral Pandemic Response

**PURPOSE:** To prepare for pandemic incidents involving child nutrition program staff and child nutrition program services.

**SCOPE:** This procedure should be implemented to safely and properly respond to pandemic incidents, some of which may involve school closures.

**KEY WORDS:** Pandemic, virus, infectious, school closures.

### **INFORMATIONAL PREFACE:**

Viral illness can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when an infected person coughs or exhales. These droplets land on surfaces and survive for hours and even days on some surfaces. The virus can be transferred to other people when they touch the contaminated surface, then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. The virus can also be transferred when people breathe in droplets from a person with a viral infection who coughs, sneezes or exhales droplets.

When infection spreads rapidly in people across a very large region, it is considered a pandemic. Preventative measures may be taken on global, national, state, and local levels to protect public health and safety.

### **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:**

Emergency preparedness is all about being ready to manage the unexpected and keep everyone safe.

During a viral pandemic...

1. Limit exposure to large groups of people. Use spacing strategies to create a six-foot distance between people. This could involve staff members working at different work stations. It could involve innovative meal delivery systems when providing meals to children.
2. Avoid one-on-one contact with individuals (hugs, handshakes, high fives, etc.).
3. Exclude (send home) nutrition program employees with symptoms of viral infection, including but not limited to fever, coughs associated with a respiratory condition, vomiting and/or diarrhea. The State health department will provide guidance on what actions to take to allow the staff member to return to work.
4. Maintain social distancing during meal service or meal delivery.
  - a. Meals served on site should be placed on a counter or tray line for quick pick up.
  - b. Meals for curb-side pick-up should be placed on a table, or placed in the trunk of the vehicle to minimize person-to-person contact.
  - c. Limit social interactions to speed up service and minimize contact time.
5. Comply with all policies for reporting notifiable illnesses to administrative personnel and/or public health departments.
6. Cross-train program staff to perform essential activities in the event of key absences or emergency situations.

## **SOP 25 – Viral Pandemic Response, continued**

7. Reinforce and closely monitor personal hygiene and hand hygiene practices.
  - a. Wash hands properly and frequently. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. Refer to SOP 1 – Washing Hands.
  - b. Apply the “no bare hand contact” rule. Wear single-use food gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods. As a best practice, wear single-use gloves when handling or delivering all foods.
  - c. As a best practice, wear a disposable apron when handling or delivering foods.
  - d. Strongly reinforce health and hygiene activities. Refer to SOP 3 – Personal Hygiene.
8. Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth. Follow appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette. Cough or sneeze using a disposable tissue or elbow, followed by proper handwashing at all times.
9. Allow only program staff, custodial staff, and approved volunteers to enter program areas.
10. Routinely clean and disinfect high-touch nonfood-contact surfaces, such as door handles, light switches, phones, keyboards, tray slides, etc. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. Disinfectants are chemical products that destroy or inactivate germs.
  - a. Use properly diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and/or EPA-registered disinfectants.
  - b. Disinfecting solutions can be transferred to the spray bottle for easier application to areas that need to be disinfected.
  - c. Allow the disinfectant to remain in contact with the surface for the appropriate amount of time. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for contact time.
  - d. Diluted household bleach disinfecting solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Prepare by mixing 1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup bleach per gallon of warm water, wearing glove and eye protections and mixing in a well-ventilated area. Contact time for a chlorine bleach solution is about 5 minutes.
11. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces before and after each use. See SOP 7 – Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces.
12. Handle program wastes properly.
13. Discontinue use of share table options temporarily.
14. As part of overall emergency preparedness, maintain an updated contact list of key partners at the State and local levels.
15. Keep staff, customers, and other stakeholders informed with current and reliable information.
16. Work in cooperation with school administration and media to communicate importance of preventative measures, such as handwashing, for all school staff and students.

### **INSTRUCTIONS INVOLVING SCHOOL CLOSURES:**

In the interest of public health, agencies could make decisions that affect normal program operations. During a pandemic, school closures may be ordered by local, county or state health officials. Since many children rely on school meals for proper nutrition, USDA may approve waivers allowing flexibilities in the provision of meals to children. State agencies may, then, apply the waivers at the State and local levels.

1. Defer to Federal, State, and Local agency protocol and guidance during crisis situations. Agencies are able to assist when conditions disrupt the day-to-day routine on a large scale. Agencies can work with Sponsors in collaborative efforts to maintain a safe food supply and keep program staff safe.
2. If available, apply for waivers that allow meal flexibilities. Sponsors are not required to provide meal service during school closures, but willingness to continue meal service operations ensures children receive nutritious meals during a public health crisis.

## **SOP 25 – Viral Pandemic Response, continued**

3. Upon approval, plan for meal service during emergency period.
  - a. Determine service methods that can be used, such as grab and go, curbside pick-up, and/or meal delivery systems.
  - b. Plan service locations. Meals may be served in unconventional places, such as parking lots, bus loops, multi-purpose rooms, libraries, parks, etc.
  - c. Determine meal accountability procedures. Separate meal counts and records must be maintained for meals served under a USDA waiver.
  - d. Identify ways to communicate meal availability.
  - e. As part of social distancing measures, the number of people arriving at one time to pick up a meal should be staggered and social interactions limited.
  - f. Strongly reinforce that staff should avoid touching their face (mouth, nose, eyes) during preparation and service of meals.
  - g. Plan for proper hand hygiene for the type of service planned.
  - h. For remote sites with no working sink, provide hand hygiene capabilities using a portable handwashing station. A portable handwashing station can be set up using a thermal container, soap, paper towels, and a discard bucket as shown.
  
4. The type of meal offered will depend on the resources and capacity of the site. Those sites, that are able to prepare ready-to-eat meals and have the capacity to deliver meals daily in a way that meets state or local food safety requirements, may do so. Home-delivered meals still have to meet all meal pattern requirements for the designated program. If emergency conditions prevent a sponsor from obtaining a certain food product, such as milk, the State Agency (KSDE) may approve the service of meals without the required menu item during the emergency period.
5. Meals served during a viral pandemic must be prepared in advance and must be ready to eat off-site. Schools may offer meals in a variety of innovative ways, such as “Grab n’ Go,” “Drive-thru,” or “Curbside” meal service.

## SOP 25 – Viral Pandemic Response, continued

6. Meals served must still comply with relevant civil rights requirements, including documented requests to accommodate children with special dietary needs. Communicate with families in need of special dietary accommodations to make plans for when and where they can obtain special meals.
7. Purchase and keep on hand, sufficient quantities of...
  - a. Chemicals used to make a sanitizing solution
  - b. Disinfectant approved for use in a foodservice facility
  - c. Single-use food gloves in several sizes
  - d. Disposable service ware suitable for unconventional delivery systems
  - e. Shelf-stable foods
8. Communicate food safety rules as they apply to the planned meal service style.
  - a. Meals provided to children must be ready-to-eat. It would not be acceptable to send unprepared menu items home with children. Cooked potentially hazardous hot foods must be cooked to proper internal temperatures before service. For example, a sponsor could not send home portions of frozen raw chicken nuggets with instructions for preparing the food at home. A sponsor could properly cook the chicken nuggets, making them a ready-to-eat food. The chicken nuggets could be delivered hot, or the chicken nuggets could be cooled within standards and sent to the household to reheat, if reheating is desired. **DO NOT ASSUME HOUSEHOLDS HAVE THE MEANS TO PROPERLY COOK OR COOL FOODS.**
  - b. Potentially hazardous foods must be held at proper temperatures or have time controls applied when serving reimbursable meals in unconventional ways.
  - c. If Time as a Public Health Control is used for a cold potentially hazardous food, the food shall have an initial temperature of 41°F or less when removed from cold holding. The food must be served to the customer or discarded within 4 hours.
  - d. If Time as a Public Health Control is used for a hot potentially hazardous food, the food shall be cooked to a proper internal temperature, and have an internal temperature of 135°F or greater when removed from hot holding. The food must be served to the customer or discarded within 4 hours. **DO NOT ASSUME HOUSEHOLDS HAVE THE MEANS TO PROPERLY COOL FOOD.**
  - e. Refer to SOP 14 – Using Time as a Public Health Control to Limit Bacteria Growth in Potentially Hazardous Foods for more information on using time as the control measure instead of temperature.
  - f. Label items packaged on site and made available for self-service with appropriate ingredient information to protect the health and safety of children who experience allergic reactions to specific foods.
  - g. As a best practice, communicate appropriate food safety actions for customer handling of menu items. For example, milk served as part of a reimbursable meal should be held cold until time of service or delivery and include instructions for consuming the milk within 2 hours. Milk or cold items designated for another day, should include instructions for storing the milk under refrigeration in the household.
  - h. A label template is provided on the KSDE, Child Nutrition & Wellness website.

**Keep Foods Safe – Same Day Service**

Hot foods should be kept hot.  
Consume hot foods within 2 hours.

Cold foods should be kept cold.  
Consume or refrigerate within 2 hours.

Discard leftover foods within 2 days.



**Keep Hot and Cold Foods Safe  
Multiple Day Service**

Hot foods should be kept hot.  
Consume hot foods within 2 hours.

Cold foods should be kept cold.  
Consume or refrigerate within 2 hours.

Foods for other days should be stored in the  
refrigerator until eaten or reheated.



## **SOP 25 – Viral Pandemic Response, continued**

9. Sponsors may send meals for Same-Day Service and Multi-Day Service. For meals designated for additional days, a sponsor could send shelf-stable, individually packaged foods that meet USDA’s summer food requirements or send ready-to-eat foods. A list of sample “grab and go” meals is available on the Child Nutrition & Wellness website.
10. Production records must be completed for each meal.
11. Provide food safety training to newly hired staff and volunteers. Reinforce food safe practices for all program personnel and volunteers.

### **MONITORING:**

A supervisor will ensure that at least one on-duty staff person is designated to implement this SOP during a viral pandemic incident.

A supervisor will exclude nutrition program employees in accordance with State health directives.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION:**

A supervisor or other designated employee will retrain and/or provide proper direction to staff and volunteers in application of this SOP during a viral pandemic incident.

### **VERIFICATION and RECORD KEEPING:**

The supervisor or other designated employee will review this SOP annually and include it as part of the site’s Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**Date Implemented:** \_\_\_\_\_ **By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Reviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Revised:** \_\_\_\_\_ **By:** \_\_\_\_\_