

# FOOD SAFETY

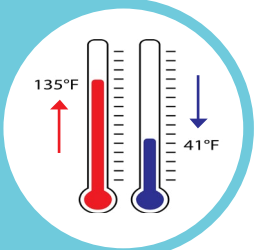
## During Alternative Meal Services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, school nutrition programs have been using a variety of alternative methods to serve school meals. It is especially important to continue to practice food safety and employee safety procedures. This fact sheet discusses food safety reminders during select, alternative meal service models. As a reminder, check with your State agency to ensure your district is able to implement the alternative meal service models.

### General Food Safety



- Properly wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces (i.e., carts, carriers, prep tables) before serving food. Clean and disinfect high-touch areas (i.e., door and sink handles).
- Maintain safe food temperatures.
  - Keep cold foods at 41 °F or below.
  - Keep hot foods at 135 °F or above.



- Use clean and sanitized thermometers to check temperatures at appropriate intervals.
  - Food thermometers for food
  - Appliance thermometers for food carriers and cold and hot holding equipment
  - Record all temperatures on a log



- Practice good hand hygiene.
  - Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds at appropriate times (use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available).
  - Properly use gloves and other utensils to protect food from bare hands.



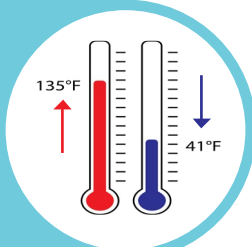
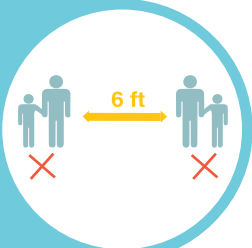
- Employee health: Do not work when sick.
  - Do not work if you are sick, especially if diagnosed with COVID-19 or showing COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Follow your district's procedures for reporting COVID-19 symptoms and for quarantining or isolating as necessary.
  - Do not work if sick with symptoms of foodborne illness.
  - Inform parents and guardians not to come to the meal distribution sites if they are sick.
- Employee safety during COVID-19.
  - Wear a mask.
  - Wear any other personal protective equipment required by the school district, local health authorities, and State agency.
  - Maintain social distance [at least 6 feet] from other staff, parents, guardians, and children as much as possible.

## Bus Route Delivery

(e.g., school bus delivers meals following bus routes)



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food containers and coolers before use.
- Take and record temperatures of food before leaving facility. Check temperatures of food at regular intervals during delivery. Record all temperatures on a log.
- Discard time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods after 4 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F – 135 °F).
- Staff in the bus or van should wear a mask, socially distance, and if the weather permits, open windows to increase air circulation.
- To protect the employees, school nutrition programs may choose to have staff wear gloves when passing out meals. Staff should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before putting on and when changing gloves. Staff should wear a mask.
- Maintain social distancing recommendations when delivering meals.
  - o Have the child, parent, and/or guardian come to the back of the bus/ vehicle.
  - o School nutrition staff will place the food at the back of the bus and then walk 6 feet towards the front of the bus.
  - o The parent, guardian, and/or child can then pick up food.



## Mobile Route Delivery

(e.g., school bus delivers meals to specific locations in town where meals are then served)



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food containers and coolers before use. Clean and disinfect high touch areas.
- Take and record temperatures of food before leaving facility. Check temperatures of food at time of delivery. Record all temperatures on a log.
- Discard time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods after 4 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F – 135 °F).
- Have a designated location for meal site(s) with either walk-up or drive-through access. Place meals on a table or cart so parents, guardians, and/or children can pick them up.
- Encourage children, parents, and guardians to wear mask and maintain social distancing recommendations, when possible, when picking up meals. Employees should wear a mask.

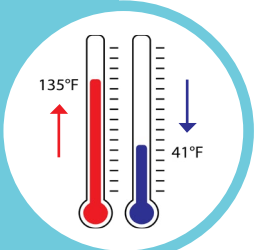




- Provide a temporary handwashing station or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at the meal site. Encourage employees to wash hands and then wear gloves to pass out meals.
- Change gloves if they become visibly soiled or damaged, between different tasks, or after touching other surfaces (e.g., face, hair, or mask).
- Have school nutrition staff place food in designated spot with families standing in line starting 6 feet away.
- Ask parents, guardians, and children to form a line with 6 feet between each family as they wait to pick up meals. Families can pick up their meals one at a time.
  - Use tape, chalk, or signs to help designate 6 feet.



## Drive-Through Style or Curbside Pick-up (i.e., parents, guardians, and/or children pick up meals in drive-through or off curb)



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize carts or tables before use.
- Minimize contact by allowing the parent, guardian, and/or child to pick up the food or by placing the food in the trunk area of the vehicle while the family remains in the car. Encourage families to wear masks even if they stay in the vehicle.
- For curbside pick-up, place food on a cart or table where parents, guardians, and/or children can drive up to the school and easily grab food without having to leave the car, if possible.
- Use multiple carts or trays so that when one has all of the food removed it can be washed, rinsed, and sanitized while the other is being used.
- Employees should wear a masks, wash hands frequently, and socially distance.
- Take and record temperatures of food after loading cart or table. Check temperatures of food at regular intervals. Record all temperatures on a log.
- Maintain safe food temperatures during pick-up.
  - Use coolers, insulated bags, ice packs, ice, and cooling equipment to keep cold foods cold.
  - Use hot holding units, insulated bags, heated food carriers, and other heating equipment to keep hot foods hot.
  - Check temperatures with appropriate thermometers.
- Discard time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods after 4 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F – 135 °F).

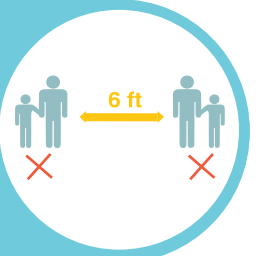
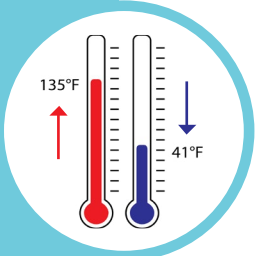




## Walk-up

(i.e., parents, guardians, and/or children pick up meals at a school site)

- Have a designated pick-up place at the school away from the main kitchen. Consider staggering meal times to reduce crowding.
- Pick a location with minimal high touch areas like doorknobs.
  - Clean and disinfect high touch areas.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize carts or tables before use.
- Place meals on a cart or table where parents, guardians, and/or children can walk in and easily grab food.
- Allow parents, guardians, and/or children to come pick up meals maintaining a 6 feet distance in between them. Encourage everyone to wear a mask to pick up food.
- Place “X” on the floor or use signs as needed to help show 6 feet and directional cues.
- Take and record temperatures of food before serving.
- Keep food at safe temperatures.



## Bulk Pick-Up

(i.e., parents, guardians, and/or children pick up multiple meals at the same time)

- Wash, rinse, and sanitize carts or tables before use.
- Place shelf-stable items on a cart or table where parents, guardians, and/or children can easily grab meals. Place refrigerated food on a separate cart and store in refrigerator until ready to serve.
- Take and record temperatures of food before packaging.
- Clearly label and date food and beverages.
- Place refrigerated items in one bag/box and shelf-stable items in another.
  - Keep refrigerated items in the fridge until pick-up.
- Provide information to parents and guardians for keeping food safe.
  - Food storage: time and temperature controls
  - Use by dates
  - Food thermometers
  - Re-heating or preparation instructions, as appropriate





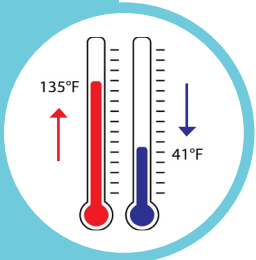
- If doing drive-through or curbside pick-up, place carts or tables where parents, guardians, and/or children can easily reach food preferably without having to leave the car, or place food in the back trunk or cargo area of the car.
- If doing in-person pick-up, encourage parents, guardians, and/or children to maintain social distance by putting a tape “X” on the floor or use signs as needed to show 6 feet.

## Home Delivery

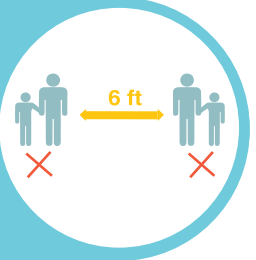
(e.g. meals are delivered directly to house using contact-free delivery)



- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food containers and coolers before use. Clean and disinfect high touch areas.
- Take and record temperatures of food before leaving facility. Check temperatures of food at time of delivery. Record all temperatures on a log.



- Staff in the bus or van should wear a mask, socially distance, and if the weather permits, open windows to increase air circulation.
- Discard time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods after 4 hours in the temperature danger zone (41 °F – 135 °F).



- Use contact-free delivery methods such as leaving food on doorstep.
- Schedule a delivery time or time range with family to ensure food will be immediately picked up.
- Alert family that food has been dropped off (e.g., ring doorbell, knock, call, text).
- If wearing gloves to deliver food, change gloves after each delivery using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol before putting on new gloves.



## References

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