COVID-19 Guidance for Mobile Food Premises

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new type of coronavirus. COVID-19 can present as an acute respiratory illness in humans. The virus is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact. More information on COVID-19 can be found in the Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet.

Mobile food premises are required to operate according to Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises. Mobile food premises such as food trucks, food carts and ice cream trucks, must possess a valid license to operate in the city of Toronto. As COVID-19 continues to spread in the community, owners and operators of mobile food premises should adjust their operations to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Operators are responsible for ensuring that physical distancing is maintained by customers at all times. Crowding is not permitted. Food should be for takeaway only. Seating should not be set up to consume food onsite. If crowds develop or physical distancing cannot be maintained, the operator should close down or move their truck to another location.

Recommendations for owners and operators of mobile food premises to protect employees and customers:

Screen employees for COVID-19 symptoms before work
- It is strongly recommended that all employees complete a health screening questionnaire before each work shift.
  - Questionnaires can be administered by asking the screening questions directly to employees and recording their responses on paper, or can be completed electronically.

Implement policies for employee attendance
- Employers should ensure employees do not come to work sick.
  - Remind employees about the importance of reporting illness to their supervisor/manager.
  - If employees become sick with COVID-19 symptoms while at work, they should go home right away and self-isolate.
  - Employees can contact Telehealth, their health care provider or an assessment centre for testing and to help determine if further health care is required.
- Establish criteria for employees to return to work.
  - In general, if an employee had COVID-19, they are able to return to work 14 days after their symptoms began. For other illnesses, or if the employee received a negative COVID-19 test, they should not attend work until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
  - There are no tests of clearance that are required for employees to return to work.

Implement measures to encourage physical distancing
- Physical distancing refers to the practice of avoiding close contact by keeping a distance of two metres (six feet) from others.
- Limit the number of employees within the mobile food premises at any one time:
  - Employees should maintain physical distancing from each other and customers, where possible.
Assign each employee a specific work station(s) and tasks to reduce overlap.

- Consider implementing the use of online and/or telephone ordering services.
- Provide visible cues for customers lining up outside the mobile food premises by placing markers such as tape, stickers or safety cones every two metres/six feet.
  - Assign an employee to actively monitor the line-up to prevent crowding.
- After placing an order, encourage customers to wait at a distance until their food is ready to be picked-up.
  - Consider implementing an order numbering system to identify orders for pick-up.
  - Leave orders on the counter or set-up a side table for the customer to pick it up without contact.
- Install plexi-glass barriers at take-out counters where employees may have close contact with customers.
- Encourage electronic payment by debit or credit card, and tap instead of pin pad use where possible.
  - Assign one employee to process all transactions.
- Do not allow customers to congregate near the mobile food premises once their food has been received. Seating should not be available for eating on premise. Food should be for takeaway only.
  - Avoid parking in the same lot or in close proximity to other mobile food premises.
- Post Physical Distancing signs in highly visible areas.

Implement measures to protect food, packaging, and utensils from contamination

- There is currently no evidence of COVID-19 being transmitted through food. However, food should be protected from contamination at all times, as outlined in Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises.
- Do not provide squeeze bottles or open communal containers for customer use:
  - Use food items such as individual packets or pre-portioned containers for condiments (e.g. ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise), where possible.
  - Individual packets/pre-portioned containers should be offered and provided with each order.
  - Alternatively, employees can apply condiments as per the customer’s choice.
- Provide individually wrapped/pre-packaged disposable utensils (i.e. forks, knifes, spoons).
- Do not provide food samples to customers.

Support and encourage proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Educate employees on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
  - Wash your hands with liquid soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds frequently throughout the day and after each interaction.
  - Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Ensure the mobile food premises is provided with an adequate supply of hot and cold water, liquid soap and paper towels to facilitate the handwashing of employees.
  - Ensure the hand washing basin remains unobstructed and easily accessible at all times.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol) in a dispenser for customer use at the order/pick-up window.
- Post Hand Washing, Cover your Cough and Hand Sanitizing signage in visible locations.
Practise proper glove use
- Glove use is not a substitute for proper hand hygiene. If employees use gloves, it is important to change them every hour, or more often, as necessary.
  - Hands should be washed with soap and water for 15 seconds before putting on and after taking off gloves.
  - Change gloves when changing tasks, after touching your face, or coming in contact with an item that may have germs.
  - When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.

Encourage the use of non-medical masks and face coverings
- **Non-medical masks or face coverings** are strongly recommended for employees when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
  - Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering may not protect you from COVID-19, but it may protect others from your respiratory droplets and germs.
- Train employees on the **proper use** of masks and how to safely put on and take off a mask.

Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Ensure frequent **cleaning and disinfecting** of high-touch surfaces and objects such as doorknobs, light switches, countertops, steering wheel, dashboard dials/knobs and mobile payment terminals, at least twice a day.
- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
  - Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
  - Check the expiry dates of products you use, and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Chlorine bleach solutions may be used for disinfection if appropriate for the surface.
  - Prepare chlorine bleach solutions according to the instructions on the label or in a ratio of:
    - 1 teaspoon (5 mL) bleach per cup (250 mL) of water, or
    - 4 teaspoons (20 mL) bleach per litre (1000 mL) of water.
  - Ensure a minimum of two minutes contact time and allow to air dry.
  - Prepare fresh chlorine bleach solution daily.
- For cleaning and sanitizing food contract surfaces, equipment and utensils, follow standards prescribed in **Ontario Regulation 493/17 – Food Premises**. The **Ontario Ministry of Health** has also provided additional COVID-19 guidance for food premises.

Useful Resources
- COVID-19 Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses Fact Sheet
- COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises – Best Practices Summary Sheet
- Food Safety for Businesses
- Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety during COVID-19

More information
For more information about COVID-19, visit our website at [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19) or call us at 416-338-7600.
References

