



**CITY OF PEABODY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
24 Lowell Street  
Peabody, Massachusetts 01960  
(978) 538-5926  
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**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
BERNARD H. HOROWITZ, CHAIRMAN  
THOMAS J. DURKIN III  
LEIGH ANN MANSBERGER, MD, MPH

SHARON CAMERON  
DIRECTOR

March 17, 2020

Dear Food Service Operator,

As you are aware, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation throughout the United States is rapidly evolving. The response to this public health emergency requires the focus and cooperation of all sectors of our society.

We want to keep our food establishment operators up to date on the situation as it pertains to continued operation of your establishment. As you are aware, Governor Baker has mandated that all food service establishments, including but not limited to restaurants, bakeries, bars, and breweries, **cease on-site consumption of food and beverages effective March 17, 2020**. Establishments may continue to offer food service on a take-out/delivery basis, as long as they implement procedures to maintain social distancing that allows for 6 feet of separation between people. Additional guidance regarding this order is available at <https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-15-2020-assembly-guidance/download>, which also includes limitations on all community, civic, faith-based, or other public events.

The Peabody Board of Health would like to remind you of specific Food Code requirements to ensure food safety and reduce the spread of illnesses such as COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and Influenza.

**At this time, we request that you review your food safety program with all employees and remind them of the following:**

**1. Food Employee Illness Reporting Requirements**

- Establishments should have retained signed copies from all employees of the “Employee Health Agreement,” which includes information on reporting illnesses. Please review the requirements of this agreement with all employees prior to their next shifts.
- The Person in Charge is required to notify the Board of Health of specific illnesses as described in Chapter 2 of the Federal Food Code <https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-protection/fda-food-code>.
- **As always, ill employees should stay home.**
- *If you have questions regarding ill employees please contact the Health Department at 978 538-5926.*

**2. Proper handwashing by all employees**

- Correct procedure – wet hands with warm running water, lather with soap and scrub between fingers, on the back of your hands and under nails. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands using a disposable paper towel.



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- Food handlers are required to wash their hands before and after completing a task and before putting on gloves. All employees in a food establishment should be reminded to wash their hands after possible contamination, i.e. touching unclean surfaces.
- All employees are required to wash their hands before leaving the restroom.
- Proper handwashing may only be completed when a hand wash sink is fully stocked – hot water at 100 degrees F or above, soap, and paper towels stocked as needed.

**3. Proper glove use**

- Glove use is only effective if done properly. Hands must be washed before putting gloves on, and when changing to a new pair. Gloves should be changed as soon as they become soiled or torn, before starting a new or different task, after handling raw meat, seafood, or poultry and before handling ready-to-eat food. Gloves must be removed properly and never reused or washed.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of gloves available in various sizes.

**4. Mechanical Ware Washing**

- Ware washing must be at the correct temperature in order to clean and sanitize properly. High Temperature dish machines must have a surface (at the dish) temperature of 160 degrees F or greater as measured by an irreversible registering temperature measuring device. Establishments should be using their internal maximum registering thermometer to check the temperature inside the machine.
- Low Temperature or Chemical Sanitizing dish machines should operate with chlorine residual between 50-100 ppm, and checked using a chlorine test strip.
- Develop protocols to ensure that mechanical ware washing is verified at least once during each shift. Keep a log to confirm completion of this check.

**5. Manual Ware Washing – 3 Compartment Sink**

- Pre-scrape or rinse away any leftover food from the food contact surface. In the first compartment, scrub all surfaces in warm, soapy water.
- In the second compartment, rinse the surface cleaned in step 1 in clear warm water. Soap residue can prevent sanitizer from killing germs. Good rinsing makes sanitizing more effective.
- In the third compartment, soak rinsed surfaces in a chemical sanitizer at the proper concentration for 30 seconds (or longer contact time as recommended by manufacturer).
- The final step is to air-dry the equipment. This is very important, as towel drying of sanitized dishes may contaminate them.

**6. Sanitizer**



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- Test Strips are required to check sanitizer concentration. Use the correct test strip for the sanitizer (usually chlorine or quaternary ammonium).
- Proper chlorine concentration is 50-100 ppm. Proper quaternary ammonium concentration is 150-400 ppm. Always follow directions on the container for mixing of sanitizing solutions.
- Develop protocols to ensure that the strength of the sanitizing solution is at the appropriate concentration each time that the sanitizer is mixed, and every 4 hours at minimum.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of test kits and that employees know how to use them

**7. Clean and Disinfect non-food contact surfaces**

- Keep non-food contact surfaces clean and use an EPA-approved sanitizer (chlorine or quaternary ammonium) to disinfect.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that customers touch often such as tables, door handles, counters, and menus on a more frequent basis.

**8. Wet wiping cloths**

- Wet wiping cloths must be kept in a container of fresh sanitizing solution between use.
- Change the solution at least every 4 hours or more frequently if soiled. Test the concentration of sanitizer every time a new batch is mixed.

**Additional recommendations that may help your establishment, customers and employees:**

- When possible, stagger employee shifts to promote a minimum of 6 feet of distancing between staff.
- Post a sign at the front door reminding customers not to be in public if they are sick, to wash hands frequently, to use hand sanitizer if hand washing is not available, and to prevent the spread of germs by covering coughs and sneezes and washing hands afterward.
- Post hand wash signage in the restrooms reminding all to wash hands.
- Post signs in employee areas informing all to wash hands, and to stay home when sick.
- Keep logs for employees to track sanitizing solution concentration.
- Dedicate an employee to wipe down menus with sanitizer.
- Use a checklist for a designated employee to clean and disinfect various common area surfaces throughout the establishment at specific times and frequently during hours of operation.



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- Consider use of disposables wares and napkins in place of linens and multi-use utensils. Have disposable wares distributed to customers by employees rather than having common receptacles for customers to select utensils, etc.
- Consider closing self-service food options such as salad bars, soup bars, etc.
- Disinfect handles to shopping carts between uses.
- Make hand sanitizer available at convenient place for all to use.

The food service industry has an important role in play in helping keep our community safe, and we thank you for your efforts during this public health emergency. We recognize the hardship that this situation is causing for many businesses. The Governor's directive makes some important changes in the system for collection of unemployment benefits that can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/applying-for-unemployment-benefits>.

At this time, the Governor's directive is scheduled to continue through at least April 5, 2020, but may be extended if circumstances warrant it. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at (978) 538-5926 if you have questions about maintaining food safety during this time. We urge you to monitor credible sources of information such as [www.peabody-ma.gov](http://www.peabody-ma.gov), [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.mass.gov/coronavirus](http://www.mass.gov/coronavirus), and <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019> for more information about the COVID-19 situation, and encourage your employees to do the same.

Please know that our thoughts are with all of you as adapt to these changing circumstances, and we thank you for your partnership in this critical effort to protect the public's health.

Sincerely,

Sharon Cameron  
Director of Health  
City of Peabody

John Yale  
Sanitary Inspector  
City of Peabody