

Instructions for conducting Virtual Retail Food Establishment Food Safety Checks during the COVID-19 emergency period

- **Do not conduct graded routine inspections until further notice unless directed to do so by your Area Director or Division of Food & Lead Risk Assessments Director.**
- **Food Safety Checks or any other visit should be conducted using the VI protocol unless the operator does not have the necessary technology.**

PHASE 1 Virtual RFE Food Safety Checks, requested by the RFE

- The RFE's have received an email inviting them to request a Food Safety Check and have been directed to contact their local BEHS office to schedule the check (the link to the regional office contacts will be provided in the invitation).
- When you receive a request, talk with the owner or the person in charge. Offer assistance with any questions or concerns they may have.
- **Use Attachment B and C from the VI protocol to set up the virtual visit.**
- Do not schedule virtual visits during "busy" times, instead schedule visits during times when the operator/PIC will have time to discuss the food safety issues observed.
- **Phase 1 Food Safety Checks will only be conducted using the VI protocol.** RFE's that do not have the necessary technology for a virtual check will be deferred until social distancing practices can be lessened in phase 3.
- These virtual visits will be non-graded, educational, compliance assistance related - similar to what we have done after hurricanes and floods.
- Concentrate your virtual observations on the following items:
 - Employee Health policies
 - Hand Hygiene
 - Proper glove usage (give them the new fact sheet of proper glove usage)
 - Frequent cleaning of high touch areas, such as refrigerator handles, microwave doors, countertops, etc.
 - Holding temperatures
 - Cooling temperatures
 - Cooking temperatures
- All observed violations should be corrected during the virtual visit. If pest are observed, discuss the needed corrections and schedule another virtual visit to follow up based on proposed action to correct.
- Use the Retail Food COVID-19 Food Safety Check form in RizePoint with activity code 15 to document these virtual visits.

Phase 2 Virtual RFE Food Safety Checks

- Perform requested virtual Food Safety Checks first.
- If none are requested, call your high-risk priority RFE's and talk with the owner or the person in charge. Offer assistance with any questions or concerns they may have and discuss the benefits of a food safety check along with the possibility of a date/time to conduct a check.
- Do not use hot sheets to select facilities to be called and virtually visited. Focus on facilities that will most likely need assistance. Use the list you have created based on the 3/25/2020 email from Sandra Craig on prioritizing visits. Keep in mind that non-franchised or those not corporately owned will need our guidance in dealing with employee health, hygiene, sanitation of high touch areas and social distancing when prioritizing.
- Conduct these virtual visits using the phase 1 protocol above.

Phase 3 RFE Food Safety Checks

Once social distancing restrictions are lessened, and physical site visits are approved, we will conduct on-site Food Safety Checks.

- Perform any requested checks that could not be conducted virtually first.
- Conduct additional food safety checks on your selected facilities priority list.

For all Food Safety Check visits, virtual or on site

- Refer any medical or quarantine questions regarding COVID-19 to the CareLine (855-472-3432)
- Offer to send hand washing signs and fact sheets to them.
- Select activity code 15 in RizePoint at the start of the inspection. We have a method that will filter these out for reporting but is necessary to have the visits posted on food grades.

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT MEETING INSPECTION NUMBERS OR FACILITIES NOT RECEIVING A ROUTINE WITHIN 12 MONTHS.

- Both virtual and on-site food safety checks will be counted towards your inspection numbers.
- If a facility declines a food safety check, discuss the COVID-19 issues (i.e., employee health, high touch area sanitation, service options, social distancing) by phone and let them know they can call us for assistance as needed. Direct them to our web site for up to date information.
- Use the Retail Food COVID-19 Food Safety Check form to document facilities that are only contacted by phone. **Use Activity Code 31** for phone contact visits.

