AFDO STRIVES TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH...

CDC Releases Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings
On April 3, the CDC released an updated recommendation regarding the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. CDC recommends the use of simple cloth face coverings as a voluntary public health measure in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

For workers on farms, and in food production, processing, and retail settings who do not typically wear masks as part of their jobs, consider the following if you choose to use a cloth face covering to slow the spread of COVID-19:

- Maintain face coverings in accordance with parameters in FDA’s Model Food Code sections 4-801.11 Clean Linens and 4.802.11 Specifications.
- Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use.
- CDC also has additional information on the use of face coverings, including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.

NOTE: The cloth face coverings recommended by CDC are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

AFDO Recommendations For COVID-19 Response for State Agencies
• Conducting Routine Inspections During COVID-19 Pandemic
• Inspector’s Responding to a Firm’s Health Related Questions During the COVID-19 Pandemic
• Requiring Gloves and Masks for All Employees in Food Manufacturing Facilities and Establishments During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This document can be found here.

DON'T FORGET: FDA Continues to Answer COVID-19 Questions & Update Documents

The Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Food and Cosmetic Information Center (FCIC)/Technical Assistance Network (TAN) continue to released responses for questions of interest to AFDO members regarding COVID-19. These answers can be found here.

It's important to check back frequently for the latest as well as visit the AFDO COVID-19 Resource Page.

This is in addition to updating its COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions page to include guidance regarding food products. Real time updates of the FDA’s Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page can be found at https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19. Updates are dated so you are able to tell what information has been added each time.

As part of the AFDO commitment to providing information and resources to members and the those we serve, we continue to add resources to the COVID-19 Resource Page. We continue to offer links to information that has been developed by our partnerships and other subject matter experts. If you identify resources that should be considered or your organization develops some of your own that can be shared with other members, please email them or the link to bbenschoter@afdo.org. We appreciate everyone who helps us be more prepared.

New Releases from FDA on COVID-19 Response

Released April 5, 2020

How do I maintain social distancing in my food production/processing facility and food retail establishment where employees typically work within close distances?
and retail food establishments, an evaluation should be made to identify and implement operational changes that increase employee separation. However, social distancing to the full 6 feet will not be possible in some food facilities. Read more...

**Released April 4, 2020**

Should employees in retail food and food production settings wear face coverings to prevent exposure to COVID-19?

On April 3, the CDC released an updated recommendation regarding the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. CDC recommends the use of simple cloth face coverings as a voluntary public health measure in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

For workers on farms, and in food production, processing, and retail settings who do not typically wear masks as part of their jobs, consider the following if you choose to use a cloth face covering to slow the spread of COVID-19. Read more...

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**What You Need to Know: Food and COVID-19: A Message from Frank Yiannas**

FDA's Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and Response Frank Yiannas tells you what you need to know about food safety and COVID-19. #Coronavirus #COVID19  See his message here.

**Managing food safety in the time of COVID-19**
March 2020 was a month unlike any of us have experienced before. Last week, Food Safety News published an opinion piece by five subject matter experts including AFDO’s executive director, Steven Mandernach. Also weighing in are Eric Moore, Director of Food Safety and Industry Relations, Testo; Dr. Ben Chapman, Professor and Food Safety Specialist, North Carolina State University; Dr. Donald Schaffner, Distinguished Professor, Extension Specialist in Food Science, Rutgers University; and Dr. Hal King, CEO, Active Food Safety.

"Beyond the transition to working remotely and the seemingly endless video meetings and webinars, we’ve collectively learned a lot about coronaviruses, environmental stability, inactivation, transmission routes, how to perform wellness checks of employees, and have fielded dozens of questions from food industry stakeholders and the media. This tragic pandemic has led to partnerships and collaborations towards many common public health, food safety and risk goals"...read more here.

**Authors Host Open Forum April 9**

On Thursday, April 9th at 2pm EST, the authors of this article will hold an open forum with Q&A on food safety during and after Covid-19.

Our distinguished panel includes:

- Eric Moore, Director of Food Safety and Industry Relations, Testo
- Ben Chapman- Professor/Food Safety Specialist, NC State University
- Don Schaffner- Ph.D. Professor/Extension Specialist in Food Science, Rutgers University
- Steven Mandernach- Executive Director, AFDO
- Hal King, PH.D.- CEO, Active Food Safety

Register now at [https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1674694054052506380](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1674694054052506380)

**FDA Provides Temporary Flexibility Regarding Packaging and Labeling of Shell Eggs**
This morning the U.S. Food and Drug Administration today released a guidance document, Temporary Policy Regarding Packaging and Labeling of Shell Eggs Sold by Retail Food Establishments During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, to provide temporary flexibility regarding the packaging and labeling of shell eggs sold to consumers in retail food establishments. Click the link to get the details.

Updated FDA Guidance to Address the Urgent Need for Blood During the Pandemic
As part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA's) ongoing commitment to fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, today the agency issued guidance for immediate implementation to address the urgent and immediate need for blood and blood components.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented challenges to the U.S. blood supply. Donor centers have experienced a dramatic reduction in donations due to the implementation of social distancing and the cancellation of blood drives. See the applicable documents here.

**FDA Commissioned Corps Officers on the Front Line of COVID-19 Response**
During this difficult time when everyday life is disrupted, classes are cancelled and work hours are cut for many around the country, we are all pulling together to do what we can to #FlattenTheCurve – to slow the spread of the coronavirus in the U.S. Social distancing and the manner in which it changes our way-of-life is not easy, but alongside other public health practices like washing our hands and covering our coughs, social distancing can actually save lives. Not only does staying at home help protect older people and those with compromised immune systems, it also helps protect the people in our community who are on the front lines of this battle – first responders and health care workers. These are the workers who are essential, who cannot stay home, and who are providing critical care for loved ones and community members. Read more about this action here.

Pew Charitable Trust Publishes Root Cause Analysis Guide and Supporting Documents
Earlier this month, the Food and Drug Administration released an action plan to improve the safety of romaine lettuce and other leafy greens. FDA had already initiated vital research and a year-long testing program for newly harvested romaine lettuce that could help the agency uncover root causes of foodborne outbreaks.

Romaine from the Salinas, California, region tainted with *E.coli* sickened more than 200 people in the United States and Canada during three overlapping foodborne outbreaks last fall, and had been a recurrent issue even before then. Although FDA declared in January that the outbreaks appeared to be over, the agency also said that it will continue to investigate the underlying root causes throughout this year’s growing season.

In situations such as these, root cause analysis (RCA) can inform crucial improvements to an industry’s food safety system and stop recurring outbreaks. That’s because this investigative approach aims to answer not just *what* things went wrong but *why* they did, and which actions could prevent these problems from recurring. A new publication from The Pew Charitable Trusts, “A Guide for Conducting a Food Safety Root Cause Analysis,” describes how food businesses and public health agencies of any size can design and execute effective RCAs and benefit from their findings, even when analyses leave some questions unresolved. Also released is an article and a Q&A with Frank Yiannas, FDA deputy commissioner for food policy and response.

Root Cause Analyses Are ‘Critical to Preventing Foodborne Illnesses’
FDA Adapts Its Investigation of Romaine Contamination to Address Key Challenges

In April, AFDO will be hosting an upcoming webinar about the guide and the overall release by Pew. Watch for details.

**Industry Groups Collaborate On "Physical (Social) Distancing in Food Manufacturing Facilities" Protocol**
In order to manage COVID-19 risks to employees it is critical for food manufacturing facilities to closely review current policies and procedures relative to current knowledge of the risks. The following guidance is based on our current knowledge of the virus and designed to help companies review and amend current policies. Ultimately, each facility will need to implement their own policies tailored to their specific facilities and risks, recognizing that food is a critical infrastructure and facilities must remain operational in order to fulfill societal needs. Unless required by authorities, physical (social) distancing should be a tool, but not a requirement, in facilities needed to operate at capacity. This can be found here.

AFDO Professional Development Series Kicked Off

AFDO is offering a series of FREE webinars and web-based training courses that can be utilized for staff development. AFDO anticipates providing a variety of courses and webinars along with our regular podcasts over the next several weeks. Because we are continuously developing new offerings, please visit this webpage on a regular basis to look for the latest training courses.

In addition, you can access the AFDO podcast catalog at the following links. Videos can be found at https://afdo.podbean.com/ and audio podcasts at https://afdoaudio.podbean.com/. Or download the AFDO app (IT’S FREE) so you can listen or watch on the go. The app is available for iPhone and Android.

No CEU's or Certificates of Attendance will be available for these sessions.

Nominations Are Now Open for 2020 Innovations in Regulatory Science Awards

Help Us Recognize Leaders and Innovators

We invite you to nominate a leader, innovator, team, or advocate for an Innovations in Regulatory Science Award, recognizing extraordinary contributions that have advanced regulatory science and made an impact on public health.
Food Packaging — Is it Safe?

**Food delivery services are in high demand right now.** Online grocery delivery sales alone have quadrupled within the past few weeks.

Families are concerned about how COVID-19 affects the food they eat and surfaces they touch.

From the FDA:

1. The U.S. food supply remains safe for both people and animals.
2. There is no evidence of human or animal food or **food packaging** being associated with transmission of COVID-19.

**What does this mean for people now?**

**Foodborne exposure to COVID-19 is not known to be a route of transmission.** COVID-19 causes respiratory illness, and the greatest risk is being around people who are symptomatic.

The FDA does not anticipate that food products would need to be recalled or withdrawn from the market for reasons related to the outbreak, even if a person who works in a human or animal food facility (e.g. a food packager) is confirmed to be positive for the COVID-19 virus.

**How should people handle delivered food?**

People should continue to consistently use the Core Four **safe food handling practices of clean, separate, cook and chill** to reduce risk from harmful germs.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, shelter-in-place orders, and the cancellation of local conferences, meetings, and events, environmental health professionals are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain access to continuing education and training.

In response to this need, NEHA is offering free access to online trainings to all environmental health professionals regardless of membership status starting on March 30, 2020.

The online trainings include our webinars, partner courses, and E-Learning videos of sessions from the 2017–2019 AECs. By watching these webinars, courses, and videos, environmental health professionals can earn continuing education contact hours toward their NEHA credentials.

At this time, open access will be available for 90 days and will end on June 30, 2020.

We also have created a COVID-19 resources page for environmental health professionals. Be sure to visit the page frequently for the latest developments and resources.

MyNEHA Portal Update
We are continually working to upgrade our online platforms for better usability. Last week, we implemented changes to the MyNEHA portal where you can manage your membership, registrations, purchases, online learning, continuing education, and more. While the functions of the portal are the same, you will notice that the navigation is different from what you’ve been used to seeing.

Detailed instructions are available here to access the online trainings. Please contact elearning@neha.org with any questions or issues related to the MyNEHA portal.

We encourage you to share this information with your friends and colleagues! We are committed to supporting the environmental health workforce during these uncertain times.

Webinar: Outbreak -- Foodborne Illness and the Struggle for Food Safety -- a chat with author Timothy Lytton

Timothy D. Lytton is Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law and currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at Georgia State University College of Law. Lytton’s research examines health and safety regulation, with a focus on food policy, gun
violence, and sexual abuse. Lytton’s most recent book, Outbreak: Foodborne Illness and the Struggle for Food Safety (University of Chicago Press 2019) analyzes the complex interaction of government regulation, industry supply-chain management, and civil liability in the U.S. food safety system. His food policy research also covers obesity, nutrition labeling, and school food.

Date: Monday, April 6, 2020  
Time: 2:00PM - 3:00PM ET  
Who: Timothy D. Lytton is Distinguished University Professor and Professor of Law and currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development at Georgia State University College of Law

Webinar: Food Safety Legislation Now and Future -- a chat with Doug Farquhar

In 2019, state legislatures introduced more than 700 bills regarding food and food safety in 2019, with 132 being enacted and 17 adopted into law. Laws in 42 of the 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia were enacted regarding food in 2019. New Jersey and New York had the most bills related to the topic (63 and 59, respectively), followed by Hawaii with 46. At the opposite end were Alaska and Ohio, which had no bills regarding food safety. So what does that mean for the year 2020 at the state legislative level? Doug Farquhar, director of Government Affairs at National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), will provide insight to what happened last year and how that will inform what could happen this year.

Webinar: Food Safety Legislation Now and Future -- a chat with Doug Farquhar  
Who: Doug Farquhar, J.D.  
Director of Government Affairs at National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)  
When: April 10, 2020  
Time: 1 p.m. EDT/10 a.m. PDT

Myths and Facts About the Five Second Rule and Handwashing
whether the five second rule is real, the correct temperature water temperature for washing hands, whether antibacterial soap makes a difference, why he likes to use paper towels, and more!

*Registration is limited to 1,000 seats

Date: Monday, April 13, 2020
Time: 3:00PM - 4:00PM ET
Who: Dr. Donald W. Schaffner is Extension Specialist in Food Science and Distinguished Professor at Rutgers University

Register Now

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NEHA Offers Free Training Too

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In response to this need, NEHA is offering free access to online trainings to all environmental health professionals regardless of membership status starting on March 30, 2020. The online trainings include our webinars, partner courses, and E-Learning videos of sessions from the 2017–2019 AECs. By watching these webinars, courses, and videos, environmental health professionals can earn continuing education contact hours toward their NEHA credentials. Check out these offerings here.

AFDO Continuing Education Tuition Reimbursement Awards

In 2017, AFDO established a non-traditional continuing education tuition reimbursement fund to be awarded annually to worthy officials who are currently employed at a state, local, tribal, or territorial government agency and are returning to college or continuing their education to seek better career and work opportunities. Each award amount is not to exceed $1500 and is not renewable. This scholarship is coordinated for AFDO by the Professional Development Committee.
All applications must be received by April 15 of the current year to be considered for the current year’s award.

Read more and apply

FDA Updates

FDA Releases updated chapters and appendixes to the Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance, Fourth Edition

The US Food and Drug Administration's Division of Seafood Safety is announcing the availability of specific chapters and appendixes of the “Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance, Fourth Edition” now dated March 2020. FDA has determined specific chapters and appendixes of the guidance could be updated with the availability of new science, opposed to withholding the information to publish the entire guidance at once. With that thought in mind, FDA has updated: Appendix 5 - FDA and EPA Safety Levels in Regulations and Guidance. The Appendix modifications may be reviewed through the “Guidance to Industry: Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance Fourth Edition – March 2020” section of the guidance document. The updated guidance supports and complements FDA’s regulations for the safe and sanitary processing and importing of the fish and fishery products using hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) methods. Updates may be accessed through FDA’s Seafood website at www.fda.gov/seafood or the Fish and Fishery Products Hazards and Controls Guidance Page.

This guidance represents the Agency’s current thinking on fish and fishery hazards and controls. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person and does not operate to bind FDA or the public. An alternate approach may be used if such approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.

Other Training Opportunities
Preventive Controls for Human Foods and Foreign Supplier Verification Programs

Intentional Adulteration Conducting Vulnerability Assessments (IAVA) – 1 Day
Course Information/Schedule Page

Preventive Controls for Human Foods Course (PCQI) – 3 Day
Course Information/Schedule Page

Preventive Controls for Human Foods Course (PCQI) Blended Course Part 2 – NEW
Course Information/Schedule Page

Foreign Supplier Verification Programs Course (FSVP) – 2 Day
Course Information/Schedule Page

EAS Consulting Group Training

Dietary Supplement Labeling Compliance Seminar
April 14 - 15, 2020 - Long Island, NY

Food Labeling Compliance Seminar
April 16 - 17, 2020 - Long Island, NY

EAS Complimentary On-Demand Webinar Understanding GRAS Submissions and Avoiding Data Pitfalls
April 16, 2020, 1:00PM ET

Lockout-Tagout

Fast Tracking Antimicrobial Agents – FDA's Accelerated Programs EAS Complimentary Webinar
April 22, 2020
The Food Safety Doctor LLC
Promoting Public Health and Food Safety through Training and FSMA Awareness

While sheltering in place, The Food Safety Doctor LLC is offering

- ONLINE Preventive Controls for Human Foods (PCQI) Courses
  - April 1-23
  - May 5-7
  - May 12-14
  - Click here to access the schedule of online PCQI Courses

- ONLINE Foreign Supplier Verification Courses (FSVP-QI) Courses
  - April 14-15
  - May 19-20
  - Click here to access the schedule of online FSVP-QI courses

Laws and Regulations Committee Updates

Laws and Regulations Committee Update
A collection of current food, drug, device, and consumer product regulatory issues and news

March 30 - 31, 2020
April 1 - 3, 2020