

FOOD AND FOOD-BASED EVENTS – INTRODUCTION

Please begin by reading the introductory document found [here](#).

According to the CDC, there are several factors that contribute to the risk of becoming infected or infecting others with the virus that causes COVID-19. These factors include:

- Location of gathering – indoor usually poses a greater risk than outdoor gatherings due to better ventilation outdoors
- Duration of the gathering – longer gatherings pose a greater risk than shorter ones
- Number of people at the gathering – more people pose a greater risk. The size of the area being used must be considered in the number to attend.
- Behavior of attendees prior to the gathering – have those present been using safe practices?
- Behavior of attendees during the gathering – are folks wearing their face masks and maintaining a social distance of 6 feet or more?

FOOD FOR OFFSITE CONSUMPTION – FOOD PANTRY

A plan for a food pantry during this time of COVID should include provisions for keeping both clients and volunteers safe through consistent application of the five layers of mitigation. Healthy Church Teams (HCTs) can begin developing their plans for submission to the District Superintendent by answering in detail the questions below. As each question is answered, the HCT should be determining the answer to the question “Who is responsible?”

Sanitation

Questions to consider: What will be our plan for cleaning the areas utilized for our food pantry before and after each use? Including in this plan should be cleaning before setup, during distribution, after setup, and after food is distributed. Consider what the high-touch areas will be, who will be responsible for cleaning, the best cleaning products to use, and how to minimize the number of times the canned goods and other surfaces are touched.

Recommendations: All areas to be used must be sanitized before, during and after food distribution. Gloves should be worn by all volunteers.

All areas to be used by staff and volunteers for the event must be cleaned before and after use, including bathrooms. Other areas of the facility should be closed off, if possible, or have signs placed indicating they are off limits.

Designate which restroom(s) are to be used. Implement system to intermittently sanitize the restrooms during the event – place adequate supplies in the restroom for spraying and possible surface cleaning.

Limit the number of people allowed in the restrooms at one time.

Distancing

Questions to consider: How will we keep volunteers at least six feet apart while preparing and distributing? How will distancing affect parking for volunteers and clients? Should the food pantry be a drive-through or will clients come into the building? How will we maintain distance between food pantry clients, and between clients and volunteers? How can we provide a one-way flow of traffic?

Recommendations: Provide advance communication to the public and potential clients on the requirements and expectations through flyers, social media posts, etc.

Place sign near entrance to the distribution point indicating that social distancing is required at all times. A safe distance must be adhered to while on site in order to assist with the health and safety of all.

Parking attendants with reflective vests can direct traffic. Parking can be marked off with cones or other ways can be utilized for not parking volunteers or clients next to each other. Separate designated parking for volunteers can be implemented with parking in alternating spaces as the means of distancing.

Distancing for drive through can be managed with cones at the entrance for one way traffic and car lengths apart – but cones or markings may not be needed if traffic is being directed.

Stop here/stand here floor markers can be used for inside distancing while clients are waiting for service – like in the supermarkets and other public areas.

Face Coverings

Questions to consider: How will we ensure that our volunteers and clients wear face coverings at all times and wear them correctly while on the premises? Will we have face coverings to share? If so, how will you reliably procure these masks? How will you manage a situation where a client refuses to wear a mask or wears a mask improperly?

Recommendation: Provide advance communication on the requirements through flyers, social media etc. Place signs near entrance to the distribution point indicating that masks must be worn correctly while on site in order to assist with the health and safety of all.

Be sure that someone is responsible for enforcement of face coverings and removal of the people that refuse to wear the face covering or refuse to wear it properly.

Decide how you will proceed if someone cannot wear a face covering or refuses to wear one. What will be the plan of action?

Health Screenings

Questions to consider: How will you do temperature checks for your volunteers? How will you – or will you - do temperature checks for your food pantry clients? How can you receive necessary information for contact tracing while maintaining six feet of social distancing? Make a plan as to what you will do if a client refuses to provide contact information. Consider where this information will be stored. What if a client does not have consistent contact information?

Recommendations: Temperature and health screening should be done by all volunteers as they arrive. If clients enter the building, temperatures should be taken and health screening done as they enter. Contact information should also be received as they enter.

Ventilation

Questions to consider: How long will your food pantry be open at a time? How can you rotate volunteers so that you limit the time each person is present? Is it possible to host the pantry outside? If so, what is the plan if there is inclement weather? If not, how will you meet the ventilation guidelines of the CDC?

Recommendations: Limit the amount of time the pantry will be open. Rotate volunteers so that no one is in an indoor space for too long. Keep fans running, and open windows, if possible.

If you distribute food outside, what is your plan if there is inclement weather?

FOOD FOR OFFSITE CONSUMPTION TAKE OUT MEAL/DRIVE-BY DINNER

for example: fundraisers, community outreach

- *Any plans for meal preparations must be included in Healthy Church Team plans and approved by the District Superintendent.*
- *A plan for offsite food consumption during this time of COVID should include provisions for keeping volunteers and those receiving food safe through consistent application of the five layers of mitigation. Healthy Church Teams (HCTs) can begin developing their plans for submission to the District Superintendent by answering in detail the questions below:*
- *Give consideration of “Who will be responsible?”*

Sanitation

Questions to consider: How will your HCT plan abide by food safety guidelines from the [Virginia Department of Health](#)? Will people in your church become certified through the local Health Department in food safety? How will the spaces used for this ministry be sanitized before, during, and after this food event takes place? Who will do the sanitizing? What will be the high touch areas to be cleaned?

Recommendations: All areas to be used must be sanitized before, during and after meal preparation and distribution.

All volunteers preparing and distributing food must wear disposable gloves.

All areas to be used by staff and volunteers for the event must be cleaned before and after use, including bathrooms. Other areas of the facility should be closed off, if possible, or have signs placed indicating they are off limits.

Designate which restroom(s) are to be used. Implement system to intermittently sanitize the restrooms during the event – place adequate supplies in the restroom for spraying and possible surface cleaning. Limit the number of people allowed in the restrooms at one time.

Distancing

Questions to consider: Since meals must be prepared at church (not in homes), can this be done with six-foot social distancing? How will we keep volunteers at least six feet apart while preparing food? What is the safest way to manage drive-through food pickup? How can we maintain a six-foot distance between our volunteers and those receiving food? How can money for food be exchanged with six-foot social distancing?

Recommendations: All, volunteers and those attending, should maintain a 6-foot social distance at all times.

Provide advance communication on the requirements and expectations through flyers, social media, etc.

Place signs indicating one-way traffic pattern. Those picking up food stay in their cars. Have designated volunteers to distribute the food so they are not handling preparation.

A basket on a table for drop-off donations could be provided.

Face Coverings

Questions to consider: How will we ensure that our volunteers wear face coverings at all times while on the premises? Will we have face coverings to share? If so, how will we reliably procure these masks? How will you manage a situation where someone refuses to wear a mask or wears a mask improperly? How will you keep volunteers safe while placing food in a car during drive-through food pickup?

Recommendations: Volunteers must wear face coverings at all time, and wear it properly covering both mouth and nose.

Those picking up food should be strongly encouraged to wear a face mask. However, if they stay in their car, the volunteer, wearing a face mask and gloves, can place the food in the trunk or back seat.

Health Screenings

Questions to consider: How will you do health screenings for your volunteers? How will you do health screenings for your drive-up food pickup clients? Will screenings be necessary for this type of event? How can you receive necessary information for contact tracing while maintaining six feet of social distancing? What will be your plan for storing this contact information? How will you receive records of who picks up food from your church, in case there is a need for contact tracing? How will you have people receiving food register to do so?

Recommendations: Temperatures and health screening of volunteers will be taken as they enter.

Those picking up food should make a reservation for their dinners ahead of time. As they enter the parking lot, they could be given a 3x5 card on which to write their name and contact information (email address or phone number). They keep the pen and drop the card in a basket before receiving their food. Cards will be collected from the basket after the event and stored in the church office.

Ventilation

Questions to consider: How long will this offsite food event last? How can you rotate volunteers so that you limit the time each person is present? How many volunteers will you need in order to limit the time each is present? What is the best space on the church premises to host food pickup events? Is it possible to distribute food outdoors? If events when food is distributed for offsite consumption are held outdoors, what contingencies need to be made in case of inclement weather?

Recommendations: Have a designated time period to pick up food. Rotate volunteers, such as some could cook, others fill the carry-out plates and others distribute.

Volunteers would take food outdoors to those in their cars. For inclement weather, have drive-up just outside the door, and have volunteers with umbrellas – or postpone the event.

FOOD DELIVERY EVENT

For example, to deliver food to shut-ins

- *Any plans for meal preparations must be included in Healthy Church Team plans and approved by the District Superintendent.*
- *A plan for offsite food consumption during this time of COVID should include provisions for keeping volunteers and those receiving food safe through consistent application of the five layers of mitigation. Healthy Church Teams (HCTs) can begin developing their plans for submission to the District Superintendent by answering in detail the questions below:*
- *Give consideration of “Who will be responsible?”*

Sanitation

Questions to consider: How will your HCT plan abide by food safety guidelines from the [Virginia Department of Health](#)? Will people in your church become certified through the local Health Department in food safety? How will the spaces used for this ministry be sanitized before, during and after this food event takes place? Who will do the sanitizing? How will we accomplish this with food prepared at church? How will distribution of the food be done safely?

Recommendations: All volunteers should use disposable gloves while preparing and distributing food. Use disposable items when possible. If desired, use environmentally friendly containers and utensils.

All areas of the facility to be used must be sanitized before, during and after meal preparation and distribution.

All areas to be used by staff and volunteers for the event must be cleaned before and after use, including bathrooms. Other areas of the facility should be closed off, if possible, or have signs placed indicating they are off limits.

Designate which restroom(s) are to be used. Implement system to intermittently sanitize the restrooms during the event – place adequate supplies in the restroom for spraying and possible surface cleaning.

Limit the number of people allowed in the restrooms at one time.

Distancing

Questions to consider: Since the food is to be prepared at church, how can this best be done with six-foot social distancing during preparation? How can this best be done with six-foot social distancing during food distribution? How will we keep volunteers at least six feet apart while loading of cars, etc.? How can we maintain a six-foot distance between any volunteers and those receiving food? Do we leave food at the door? How can we communicate that we cannot come

inside? How many volunteers do you need to keep from having more than one person in the car (unless those in the car are related)?

Recommendations: All volunteers should maintain a six foot social distance at all times.

When the delivery is made to the recipient, it is recommended that it be done as a contactless process.

Preferred - Delivery volunteer will set containers down outside when possible - a call to the resident indicating that the delivery is being done can be made when the volunteer is nearby so that the recipient is able to put on a mask and come to the door for a wave or socially distant greeting and so the food does not sit in the elements or at the mercy of a dog or squirrel.

If food must be delivered inside, the packages should be placed just inside the door with limited time spent inside the location.

Ideally, couples could deliver the food so that there would be two related people distributing to those receiving the food.

Face Coverings

Questions to consider: How will we ensure that those present wear face coverings at all times while on the premises? How can we request that those receiving food wear masks to the door to receive it? How can we best communicate these requirements prior to the event?

Recommendations: All volunteers should wear a face covering throughout the event.

Prior information should be given to those receiving the food to request that they wear a face covering when coming to their door.

Health Screenings

Questions to consider: How will you do health screenings for your volunteers? How can you receive necessary information from those served for contact tracing while maintaining six feet of social distancing? What will be your plan for storing this contact information?

Recommendations: All volunteers will have temperature checked and complete the health screening as they enter. A six feet social distance must be maintained during preparation and distribution of the food.

Contact information from those served can be gathered beforehand, and should be kept in the church office.

Ventilation

Questions to consider: How long will this event last? How can you rotate volunteers so that you limit the time each person is present during food preparation? How many volunteers will you need in order to limit the time each is present?

Recommendations: Proper ventilation of preparation area should be maintained.

Updated 10/24/2020