Date: March 16, 2020
To: Mendocino County Food Facilities and Hazardous Materials Facilities
From: Mendocino County Environmental Health
Subject: COVID19 (Coronavirus) Guidelines

Due to the ongoing spread of the COVID19 coronavirus regionally and nationwide, Mendocino County Environmental Health would like to emphasize the extra precautions your facility should implement to minimize everybody’s risk of exposure at your business.

Currently, as of Monday, March 16, there has not been a confirmed case of COVID19 in Mendocino County. However, the situation remains serious, as evidenced by the recent school closures and recommended closure of bars/breweries and reduced occupancy of restaurants. Your continuing endeavors will directly help promote efforts to keep our communities safe from COVID19; while it may not be ultimately possible to prevent the spread of COVID19 in Mendocino County, our combined efforts can help reduce its impact, minimize risk to our vulnerable populations, and not overwhelm our limited local health care system.

You’ve probably heard repeatedly the importance of frequent, proper handwashing and the practice of social distancing. These activities remain critical for efforts to minimize the risk of spreading COVID19 to succeed, and you should emphasize this with your employees. These practices should be performed continually. However, this situation warrants additional action to help curb the spread of COVID19. This guidance is designed to protect both your employees and all members of the public who patronize your business.

**Enhanced Hygiene**

Everyone needs to practice good self-care and follow increased hygiene measures that include:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
• Avoid close contact with other people. Where feasible, employers should develop protocols to minimize employee’s close contact with work colleagues and customers
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
• Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
• Require employees who are sick to stay home, and maximize flexibility in granting sick leave so that sick employees feel comfortable staying home
• Post signage requesting customers with flu symptoms (cough, fever, etc) to not enter your business
• Implement telecommuting options wherever feasible

**Enhanced Sanitizing**

Exposure is thought to mostly occur through respiratory droplets, but surfaces can still transfer the virus from person to person. The good news is that COVID19 is easily killed through proper sanitizing with disinfecting wipes and other standard cleaners. Frequently touched surfaces are your critical control points for sanitizing, and these locations will be different for different facilities, but generally include door handles, hand rails, countertops, table tops, phones, keyboards, keypads, cash registers/drawers, touch screens, light switches, and other fixtures and work equipment. Groceries and markets will have additional critical control points such as fountain drink dispensers, condiment stations, etc. It is every business’ responsibility to identify their critical control points and ensure staff are implementing updated procedures to sanitize frequently.

**These enhanced hygiene and sanitizing measures should be reviewed with each employee at the beginning of every work day, and reinforced frequently throughout each day.** While these measures may seem extreme, there are still a lot of unknowns re: the extent of COVID19 spread, including what extent of our population may be asymptomatic carriers. Your focused effort to help protect the health of your employees and customers will not go unnoticed by either group, and Mendocino County Environmental Health thanks you for your commitment to the health and safety of all of our community members.

If you have any questions related to the protocols and information in this letter, please call Environmental Health at 234-6625. If you have any other questions regarding COVID19, please call the Mendocino County COVID19 Call Center at 234-6052.

Respectfully,

Trey Strickland, Director
Mendocino County Environmental Health