

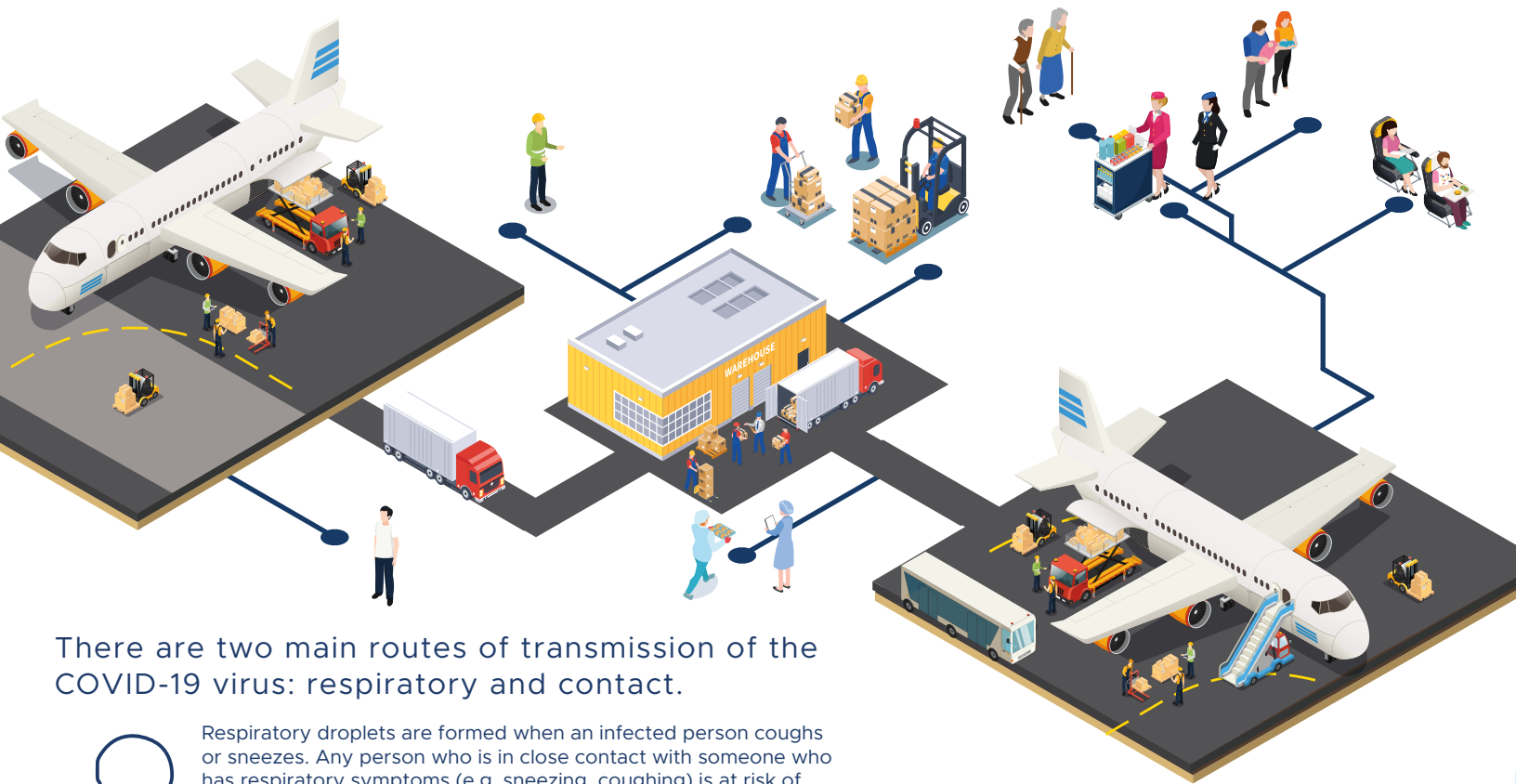
The Impact of COVID-19 on Onboard Food Services

Understanding the pandemic in the context of our industry.

How we protect.

People are at the heart of what we do. Whether we are an airline, a food provider or a service provider, our top priority is the safety of our passengers, crew and the teams that we work with. The world is facing an unprecedented public health crisis and information specific to the new COVID-19 is still limited and evolving. Even so, we must be proactive. QSAI is staying up to date

on the necessary control measures to limit the spread and cross-contamination potential of COVID-19, by gathering available research on coronaviruses (COVID-19, SARS, MERS, etc.), public health agency recommendations and current regulatory approaches. Let's join efforts to protect our people and ultimately, the public at large.



There are two main routes of transmission of the COVID-19 virus: respiratory and contact.



Respiratory droplets are formed when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Any person who is in close contact with someone who has respiratory symptoms (e.g. sneezing, coughing) is at risk of being exposed. Droplets also land on surfaces where the virus could remain viable. So the immediate surroundings of an infected individual can also be a source of transmission, known as contact transmission.

Our #1 Defense

Washing hands with soap and water and using alcohol-based hand sanitizer kills the COVID-19 virus. Hand washing also helps reduce environmental contamination. As always, gloves do not replace handwashing, please wash hands before and after glove use!



Since the two main routes of transmission are respiratory & contact, **we must wash our hands and not touch our face as much as possible.**

Can coronaviruses grow in food?

Coronaviruses need a host (animal or human) to grow in and as of yet, there is no evidence to suggest transmission through food for COVID-19. Further, experience with SARS and MERS suggest that people are not infected with the virus through food.

What about surfaces?

Coronaviruses can survive on surfaces from 2 hours up to 9 days.

So far, there is no case of COVID-19 confirmed to be transmitted through surfaces (e.g. food contact surfaces, non-food contact surfaces, food packaging, etc.) However, recent review shows that human coronaviruses (e.g. SARS, MERS) can survive on surfaces for a duration ranging from 2 hours to 9 days depending on material type and specifically, up to 24 hours on cardboard and up to 2-3 days on plastics and metals. Fortunately, these viruses can be inactivated by surface disinfection/sanitization procedures with ethanol, hydrogen peroxide or sodium hypochlorite.

How can we inactivate viruses on surfaces?

Effective inactivation can be achieved within 1 minute using common disinfectants. Currently, WHO recommends using either 70% ethyl alcohol to disinfect small areas between uses, such as reusable dedicated equipment (e.g. thermometers); or sodium hypochlorite at 0.5% (equivalent to 5000 ppm) for disinfecting surfaces.



Remember: Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated (e.g. door knobs, elevator buttons, etc.)

What about thermal sanitization?

Based on what we know about other types of coronaviruses, we know that these viruses are enveloped and are sensitive to heat. If the envelope of the virus is no longer intact (due to soap, heat or other chemicals), the virus is no longer able to infect their host. So far, WHO does not mention information about thermal sanitization so the exact minimum temperature to deactivate COVID-19 is still unknown. As such, heat sanitization must be paired with the use of a detergent.



COVID-19 symptoms are currently estimated to appear within 14 days of the a person being infected.

What is contact tracing?

Once a person is confirmed with COVID-19, it is crucial to find out all possible points of transmission - who did this person work with, what surfaces were they in contact with, where and when were they working? Contact tracing has the goal to reduce the transmission pathways of COVID-19.



Currently, there is no evidence to suggest transmission of COVID-19 through food. However, human coronaviruses have been known to survive on surfaces for 2 hours to 9 days.



How we care.

By reviewing each checkpoint, we can prove that we are doing our part to educate ourselves on best practices, assess our risks and implement control measures to address these new health and safety risks. We may not be there yet, but knowing our limitations will help us adapt as necessary to reach our common objective - to protect ourselves, our valued passengers, beloved crew and our neighbours, near and far.



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Developed in consultation
with and managed by
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Pathway to COVID-19 Risk Management

Long before this global crisis began, MQ and QSAI have been at the forefront of food safety. In the wake of this pandemic, COVID-19 has presented us with new and even unprecedented challenges. As more research and recommendations are published, it is important to us that our industry adapts to best practice against these new risks.



QSAI is working to implement requirements targeted to COVID-19 for inflight caterers that will protect all their employees, food handlers, our passengers and airline crew alike.

In addition to these targeted COVID-19 requirements, extra vigilance is necessary for other relevant standards within the QSAI Food Processing Safety module, which was designed to control physical, chemical and biological contamination, including food-borne viral contamination (e.g. hand washing stations, covering food, outer packaging, overall cleanliness, etc.)

Assess Your Risk

With the introduction of new risks, we have the responsibility to address them with robust action; this includes conducting a risk assessment on ingredients, raw materials, packaging and importantly, processes. We must consider the processes in place at our facilities and assess the likelihood of occurrence of COVID-19 and the potential severity of occurrence. Are our current processes able to defend against the coronavirus?



Food Safety Management System



Food Supplier Approval & Monitoring

We have the responsibility to ensure that our suppliers are informed and preventative measures are taken to limit the spread of COVID-19. A new requirement for inflight caterers is to have written assurances from their suppliers that measures such as symptom screening have been implemented.



Emergency response plan

In the event of a diagnosis, we should be prepared with a response plan and be able to identify and protect the processes and individuals who are most at risk.



Food Safety Training Programme

It is important for all employees to be aware of the implications that COVID-19 has on their tasks and behaviour. Food handling employees should be trained on disease transmission, symptoms to be aware of and any additional measures to be taken related to cleaning and sanitization.



Medical Screening of Employees and Visitors

A strict monitoring and reporting procedure for all employees and visitors for symptoms of COVID-19 and contact with those with symptoms is a must.



Social distancing

Governments and health advisors around the globe have put in place requirements for social distancing. Practicing social distancing in the workplace such as at receiving, dispatch and delivery should be practiced whenever possible.



GMP

Personal Appearance - Uniforms, Hair Coverings, Jewellery

Masks are currently not mandatory but if they are used, practices to remove masks should be derived from the health-care setting, being careful to not touch the front portion and to wash hands after use.



The QSAI glove policy remains unchanged but it must be emphasized that gloves must not replace handwashing. Glove use must be paired with proper handwashing before and after.

Proper Hand Washing

Handwashing is the number one prevention measure we can take against COVID-19 as individuals. The updated requirements recommended is to wash hands for 40-60 seconds when visually soiled. Hand sanitizer must be at least 60% alcohol.



Food Process

Food Safety Controls for Receiving Foods

A policy must be created to reduce the points of contact between employees and delivery persons (no handshakes, no sharing of pens, etc.), including social distancing measures. The new policy must be clearly visible in the receiving area and implemented until further notice.



Food Safety Controls of Potentially Hazardous Foods at Dispatch and Delivery

Similar to measures taken at receiving, dispatch and delivery employees must exercise social distancing measures when interacting with crew members whenever possible. Washing and sanitizing of hands throughout the process (e.g. before unloading trolleys) should be followed and as such, the dispatch/ramp area must be equipped with hand sanitizer, to cleaning and sanitization.



Employee Identification on Records

Contact and exposure tracing is the key to allowing us to act fast when we need to. Records with a clear indication of which employee performed the task will be crucial in the event of having to trace the exposure of equipment, food and team members to COVID-19 in the event of a diagnosis.



- Receiving
- Washing Fruits & Vegetables
- Heat Treatment
- Rapid Cooling
- Food Preparation & Assembly
- Dispatch & Delivery



We can solve this together.



Cleaning & Sanitization

Cleaning & Sanitization Program

Cleanliness of Non Food Contact Surfaces

The disinfectant used should be one for which the manufacturer claims antiviral activity, meaning it can kill the virus (such as chlorine-based disinfectants). The WHO and the EPA have recommendations. Please verify the chemicals used at your facility against EPA recommendations for anti-viral properties and contact time.



Pot Wash Area

Dishwashing Area

Sanitization of Food Contact Surfaces

Equipment must be sanitized with a chemical sanitizer. In the US, food facilities are required to use EPA-registered sanitizer products in their cleaning and sanitizing practices. The EPA has a list of disinfectants effective against COVID-19. If using thermal sanitization, this **must** be combined with a detergent.



Cleanliness and Disinfection/Sanitization of Bulk Airline Equipment

All bulk airline equipment must be sanitized with a disinfectant with antiviral properties upon arrival at the facility and prior to uplift to another flight. This is now **mandatory** even if trolleys are not visually soiled.



Cleanliness and Maintenance of Toilets and Changing Rooms

When possible, the toilet should be flushed with the lid closed to prevent droplet splatter and aerosol clouds. If not possible, the toilet should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily by a trained cleaner wearing PPE.



As we face the new world we live, we must address concerns around the readiness of airlines and inflight caterers to align with recommended practices for minimizing health and safety risks from this viral disease. We want to face these changes together, by addressing focus areas and new requirements where these risks can be kept to a minimum or removed altogether.