

PUBLICATION

Coronavirus: FDA Offers Guidance for Food Industry Stakeholders

Authors: Wendy M. Yoviene
March 19, 2020

On March 18, 2020, the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA) held a call to answer questions from food industry stakeholders related to the impact of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), with an emphasis on food safety and food supply.

Key takeaways for food manufacturers included:

- There is no evidence that food or food packaging is a source of COVID-19 transmission. Food recalls or product holds are not currently required and are not anticipated in the event an employee in a food facility is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Food manufacturing is considered a critical infrastructure industry of national importance that should, to the greatest extent possible, be permitted to continue operations uninterrupted. See The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America found [here](#). FDA will provide maximum flexibility to allow the food industry to continue to safely provide an uninterrupted food supply to Americans.
- If food manufacturers experience continuity of operations issues related to transportation, movement within a quarantined area, or supply chain interruption, the National Business Emergency Operations Center at FEMA is available to assist 24/7 at nbeoc@fema.dhs.gov.
- Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 should follow CDC guidance on what to do when diagnosed. Employers and employees are encouraged to visit the CDC's "What to do if you are sick with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)" printout, available [here](#). Other employees that might have been exposed should be notified while maintaining confidentiality, and local health authorities should be consulted to assess risk and whether further actions may be required. A Directory of Local Health Departments is available [here](#).
- For the foreseeable future FDA inspections will focus on mission critical and for cause inspections, and in general will not be unannounced. Most foreign facility inspections will be postponed through at least April 2020.

For more information about how this issue may affect your business or related matters, please contact [Wendy Yoviene](#) or any member of [Baker Donelson's FDA Group](#). Also, please visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): What You Need to Know](#) information page on our website.