



# BAHFSA

THE BAHAMAS AGRICULTURAL HEALTH & FOOD  
SAFETY AUTHORITY

## **Guidelines for All Food Handlers**

There is no link to contracting the Coronavirus via food, however, the virus can survive on different surfaces for varying times. Therefore, all food handlers, i.e., those who prepare or cook food for others (particularly at nursing homes or for elderly family members); provide freshly cooked food for sale; provide fresh produce for sale, e.g. at a fruit and vegetable stand or farmer's market, or those who package and/or deliver food, are asked to follow these food safety and hygiene measures to prevent the possible spread or contraction of Covid-19:

1. If you own a business but do not have a business license, close your business immediately!
2. All food handlers in a food business shall have a Food Handler's Certificate and if not, shall not continue to handle food until it is obtained;
3. Those who do not own a food business but handle food, e.g., in their homes or cook for family and/or friends, are asked to pay close attention to the guidelines that follow;
4. Whenever handling food, ensure that you are wearing clean clothes and/or change your clothes if you've just arrived home from being out in the general public; food business operators (FBOs) should ensure their staff come to work clean;
5. FBOs should ensure that counter surfaces, utensils (including cutting boards) and other cooking equipment are washed and sanitized at the start of each day; or the same at home before preparation of meals; clean and sanitize the counter or cutting board in between service to clients or after preparing home meals;
6. Use different cutting boards (color code) for fresh ready to eat foods and raw foods that are to be cooked; always prepare the fruits and/or vegetables first, then fish followed by meats;
7. FBO's should only operate with essential staff; when preparing meals at home, reduce foot traffic by others in the kitchen area;
8. FBOs must have a cashier or someone to collect payments with no food handling responsibility; during home preparations, folks are asked to refrain from touch anything not a part of the food preparation process;
9. Thoroughly cook food at the appropriate temperature before serving to others;
10. Wear gloves during food preparation; change every two hours or sooner, if necessary or when changing tasks such as emptying the garbage, using the restroom, answering the phone or having lunch; refrain from smoking;



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11. Wear face masks/shields during food preparation to prevent transfer of droplets in the event you, a worker or a client unknowingly has contracted the virus; this is not necessary for home preparations;
12. Wear a disposable apron when handling or preparing food to prevent cross contamination; change the apron every two hours or sooner, if necessary; remove apron if using the restroom or emptying the garbage or when changing to another task;
13. Place hair in a bun and wear a hair net, cap or head cloth which covers one's hair; if you have dread-locks, tie up in a bun and wear a protective cover (head wrap);
14. FBOs should provide wrapped single-use straws and utensils for clients or have staff dispense them to limit client interactions;
15. If there are any staff who are showing symptoms or feel ill, they should stay at home, self-isolate and call a medical professional for guidance;
16. Practice social distancing when serving your clients (only provide take-out; do not allow dining in) and even at home if there are many persons in the household, for your safety and theirs (particularly if they are out in the public during the day);
17. A FBO must have a hand washing sink (with hot water) present for staff to wash hands on a regular basis using potable running water; the following procedure should be followed when washing hands and should last 20-30 seconds. The same procedure should be followed for those who prepare meals at home:
  - a. Wet hands with warm running water;
  - b. Place liquid soap in hands to make a lather;
  - c. Rub hands together, on top and in between fingers, including the wrists (and if necessary, up to the elbows);
  - d. Rinse hands under warm running water;
  - e. Use a single use paper towel to dry your hands;
  - f. A hand sanitizer may be used after washing your hands.
18. Keep tuned to updates from the MOH, The Office of The Prime Minister and The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries along with the Food Safety and Quality Unit at BAHFSA for any changes in your daily business and home meal preparations.