
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS — COVID-19 RESPONSE

Suspension of Food Safety Inspections. On Friday, March 20, 2020, the Department of Inspections and Appeals [suspended](#) routine food inspections of hotels, home bakeries, and food establishments, including restaurants, bars, and food trucks, until further notice, due to the spread of COVID-19. The Department's Food and Consumer Safety Bureau will limit inspections to inspections based on complaints, follow-up inspections, and pre-opening inspections for new businesses.

Federal Food and Drug Administration Guidelines. On March 18, 2020, the Food and Drug Administration issued an [order](#) for the discontinuation of food manufacturer inspections until further notice. As a result, the Department of Inspections and Appeals is temporarily suspending inspections of food processing plants.

Food Establishment Licensee Requirements. Following the Governor's order to close all bars and limit restaurant service to drive-through, carryout, and delivery until 11:59 pm on March 31, 2020, the Department issued a [memorandum](#) to all current food license holders with this instruction. The recommendations for restaurants remaining open with limited service are as follows:

- Closely monitor food workers for signs of illness and send ill workers home immediately. Ill food workers should stay home for at least seven days after they begin exhibiting symptoms and three days after fever and other symptoms stop.
- Immediately implement flexible leave policies and educate all food workers to stay home while they are ill. Do not require health care provider notes for food workers to return to work.
- Closely monitor food employee handwashing and hygiene practices.
- Increase cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection frequencies for all areas of the establishment, especially high-contact surfaces such as door handles, tables, chairs, and restroom fixtures.
- Ensure disinfecting and sanitizing agents are effective for COVID-19.

Businesses that need to apply for or renew their food licenses are encouraged to do so online; however, licenses that are more than 60 days past due cannot be renewed online. The Department will waive late fees for businesses with licenses that are currently outstanding for the length of the Governor's COVID-19 disaster proclamation, and for an unspecified length of time during the recovery phase.

Suspension of Survey Inspections. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has suspended nonemergency survey inspections across the country. Effective March 4, 2020, survey inspection activity is limited to the following (in priority order):

- All immediate jeopardy complaints (cases in which entity noncompliance has placed the health and safety of individuals in its care at risk for serious injury or harm) and allegations of abuse and neglect.
- Complaints alleging infection control concerns, including facilities with potential COVID-19 or other respiratory illness cases.
- Statutorily required recertification surveys (nursing homes, home health, hospice, and intermediate care facilities for individuals with an intellectual disability or related conditions).
- Any follow-up visits necessary to resolve current enforcement actions.
- Initial certifications.
- Surveys of facilities/hospitals that have a history of infection control deficiencies at the immediate jeopardy level in the last three years.

- Surveys of facilities, hospitals, and dialysis centers that have a history of infection control deficiencies at lower levels than immediate jeopardy.

LSA Staff Contact: Angel A. Banks-Adams (515.281.6301) angel.banks-adams@legis.iowa.gov

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