



INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR “FEEDING NEW YORK” BY HOLDING A CHARITABLE FOOD DONATION DRIVE-THROUGH EVENT TO PROVIDE FOOD TO COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

April 28, 2020

This interim guidance was created for those interested in setting up a charitable food drive-through event in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Those looking to use this interim guidance can do so immediately and should follow all applicable practices and requirements outlined below. Those interested in setting up a charitable food drive-through event do not need to contact the Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) or the Department of Health (DOH) for authorization prior to operating under this guidance. This guidance does not supersede, replace, or cover activities currently conducted by food banks or their associated entities.

Operators

Anyone involved in the food drive-through event must maintain proper hand and respiratory hygiene by adhering to the following:

- Do not participate if you are sick.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wear a face covering and gloves that follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DOH guidelines.
- Avoid close contact with other people by maintaining a distance of at least six feet.

Given the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency and to the extent practicable, entities wishing to utilize this guidance should implement reasonable measures to increase social distancing and reduce the density of people congregated in any given area.

Event operators should organize food items, prior to the event, to reduce exposure time with the public. To reduce the time that people must wait in line and reduce overall traffic congestion, operators should organize foods by category: shelf stable, refrigerated, or frozen and place food in boxes or in carrier bags. Event should take place in areas that are not currently used by others. Event should not disrupt or impede the flow of traffic.

To help prevent spread of COVID-19, procedures and supplies should be in place and available to encourage proper hand and respiratory hygiene, as well as routine cleaning and disinfection of high-risk locations (e.g., restrooms, entrances, exits, point of donation/transaction, etc.). Procedures should also be in place to sanitize frequent touchpoints throughout the day.

Food Products

All food products for distribution must be free of charge and comply with the following:

- Come from an approved source (facility licensed/permitted by the Department of Agriculture and Markets, registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), inspected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or permitted by the local or state health department).
- Be transported in a clean and sanitary condition.
- Be stored in locked vehicles when unattended to avoid the possibility of contamination.
- Be maintained in a sanitary manner.

- Be free of adulterants/contaminants.
- Be packaged so that the package is sealed and intact. Filling of takeaway containers, jars, bottles, etc. is not permitted.
- Be labeled according to local, state, or federal requirements. For more information on packaged food labeling requirements, visit <https://agriculture.ny.gov/food-safety/food-labeling>.
- Be protected from cross contamination, i.e., raw and ready-to-eat foods should be kept separate.
- Be stored correctly:
 - Foods that require refrigeration must be stored at 41°F or less at all times.
 - Foods that are frozen must remain frozen at all times.

Foods that cannot be distributed using this guidance include:

- Raw milk.
- Foods that are not packaged and/or not labeled properly.
- Foods that have expired.
- Foods that are off-conditioned or damaged in any way.
- Distressed cans with severe dents and bulges.
- Food that is made in a residence.

Attendees

People attending the drive-through event should remain in their vehicle and remember to practice social distancing, wear a mask if within six feet of others, and follow proper traffic safety rules.

Anyone who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in public in accordance with [Executive Order 202.17 and 202.18](#). Additional information can be found at [Interim Guidance on Executive Orders 202.17 and 202.18 Requiring Face Coverings in Public During the COVID-19 Outbreak, April 17, 2020](#).

Further, employers must provide essential workers with masks free of charge to wear when interacting with the public in accordance with [Executive Order 202.16](#). Additional information can be found at [Interim Guidance on Executive Order 202.16 Requiring Face Coverings for Public and Private Employees Interacting with the Public During the COVID-19 Outbreak, April 14, 2020](#).

Additional Resources

New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Website
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets COVID-19 Website
<https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus>

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 Website
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>