



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Deputy Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

As the number of COVID-19 cases in the United States increases and the World Health Organization has classified the COVID-19 as a pandemic, we are issuing the following guidance on visitors and food services.

To ensure the safety and well-being of USDA employees, USDA recommends adjusting public and visitor access **beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 until further notice**, according to the following guidance:

A. LIMIT VISITOR ACCESS

1. **Reconsider Visits** – Consider limiting visitors only to conduct USDA mission critical business. Consider hosting meetings virtually, using teleconferencing, video, and webinars. Please reach out to your Assistant Chief Information Officer if you need assistance with hosting a virtual meeting.
2. **Schedule & Screen** - Visitors seeking entry to an USDA facility must comply with the following security screening procedures:
 - i. *Schedule Visits*: To the extent possible, schedule any visits in advance.
 - ii. *Ask Health & Travel Questions*: Facilities should develop a process to ensure that all visitors are screened using the “*Visitor Health and Travel Questionnaire*” prior to being admitted to the USDA facility.
3. **Escort Required** - All visitors must be escorted by USDA personnel at all times during their visit and should not be allowed access to locations directly relating to the reason for the visit.

B. FOOD SERVICE

There is no indication that COVID-19 is transmitted by food or food packaging. Our food service employees remain committed to following hygiene practices when handling or preparing foods. To further protect the USDA workforce, we are taking the following actions regarding food service access at USDA facilities:

1. **All USDA controlled food service at USDA facilities will be CLOSED to the general public and visitors.**
 - a. Buffet and self-service style food service is not permitted at any USDA facility. Pre-packaged, ‘grab and go’ foods, vending items and made-to order food service may continue.
2. All USDA controlled food service at USDA facilities may remain open to USDA employees and USDA contractors only.

Remember to follow good hygiene practices and wash your hands before and after going to a food service location.

C. ONSITE BUSINESSES/RETAIL

Permanent vendors at USDA controlled facilities may remain OPEN to USDA employees and USDA contractors only.

Please visit the Be Prepared Website for the latest Federal government information at <https://www.dm.usda.gov/beprepared/Covid19.htm>.