

# Fevia



## Coronavirus : Food Industry sector guide

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## INTRODUCTION

In this crisis caused by the coronavirus, the food industry plays a key role in ensuring the supply of food. It is therefore crucial that workers continue to work. At the same time, everyone's health is primary and the rules issued by the public authorities in this area must therefore be strictly and scrupulously respected by everyone.

Therefore, the social interlocutors of the sector call to the responsibility of all the companies and all the workers of the sector to strictly respect the general hygienic instructions and the rules of "social distancing".

**So, the social interlocutors call the companies to apply in all cases the "directives on social distancing in food companies" in agreement with the internal consultation organizations. It is also important to evaluate the measures regularly.**

It is important that the guidelines that have been translated in the company are followed by the company and also by all the workers in the company. Managers must enforce and monitor compliance with the instructions during work, breaks and transportation. Workers are fully committed to applying them individually and collectively.

Workers can worry, it's an exceptional situation for everyone. This is why it is important to regularly discuss with the internal advisory organizations about the policy of social distancing applied in the company. Open and constructive communication with an understanding of everyone's concerns.

The policy of social distancing is also important for new workers, including temporary workers, and outsiders.

including those who enter in the workplace. It is important that the company informs them about the rules, and that the managers encourage them to respect them. This information to the visitor of the measures in effect in the company must be given before they enter the company.

This applies both to the external person who come to deliver or collect products and to external persons in charge of cleaning or maintenance, for example.

The Integration Agency has produced pictograms and information in several languages. It is recommended that companies use them to inform workers, subcontractors and external parties who do not understand Dutch or French well.

You can find this information here: <https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/corona-meertalige-info>

## BACKGROUND

The ministerial decree on emergency measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus imposes a series of measures on companies.

### What does it mean for the food industry as a essential sector?

- All companies – whatever their size - are required to organize teleworking for any function where it is possible
- For functions to which teleworking at home cannot be applied, companies must take the necessary measures to ensure respect of the rules of social distancing, especially keeping of a distance of 1.5 meters between each person. This rule also applies to transportation organized by the employer
- If it is not possible to guarantee the 1.5 meter distance between each person, it is important that food companies take additional protective measures

## GENERAL MEASURES

- ✓ **Translate the guidelines into the company context and follow up, in consultation with the appropriate internal advisory organization.**

To support food companies, the social partners of joint commission 118 publish guidelines for social distancing in the food industry. It is important to translate these guidelines within the company in regular consultation with the works council and the committee for prevention and protection at work, the trade union delegation and the staff (cf. articles 52 and 53 of the Welfare Act), according to their respective abilities. In this way, support and monitoring of the measures will be strengthened.

- ✓ **Why Prevention and Social Distancing Measures ?**

“Social distancing” is a combination of actions or measures to reduce the spread of infections, such as coronavirus, through droplets (coughing, sneezing, leaking), direct physical contacts, indirect contacts through infected objects or surfaces, and through the air.

- ✓ **Involve the experts**

Companies should justify their approach with a risk analysis in which, by activity/situation, the risk, risk assessment and measures are presented. Existing risk analyses in the context of safety, health and wellness at work can be used as a starting point. It is also recommended to make use of the available expertise of internal and external services for prevention and protection at work. If it appears that the application of social distancing measures is not possible for some activities, it is important that companies take additional protective measures.

✓ **Provide training, information and instructions to ensure everyone follows the guideline**

It is important that the guidelines that have been translated within the company are followed by the company as well as by all the workers in the company.

Managers must enforce and monitor compliance to the instructions during work, breaks and transportation. Workers are fully committed to implementing them individually and collectively.

Provide training, information and instructions for everyone to follow the guidelines, for workers as well as for outsiders, trainees, subcontractors, temporary workers and anyone else entering the workplace.

It is advisable to make posters on the protection policy, prevention and social distancing in the form of pictograms and post them in different places. Here you will find explanations in different languages: <https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/corona-meertalige-info>.

✓ **Give the contact details of the contact persons**

Also include the contact details of useful reference persons from the internal or external prevention service, such as the occupational doctor, the person of trust the prevention advisor, the prevention advisor for psychosocial aspects, ... and a possible contact point for questions related to the coronavirus.

## KEEPING THE DISTANCE IN WORKPLACE

**Workers keep at least a distance of 1.5 meters during work, breaks and clothing changes. Both on the line and when moving from one location to another.**

**In order to ensure this distance, the following measures have been taken :**

- Markings, tape or physical barriers were used to delimit areas or locations  
*Consider one-way to move or priority rules in corridors and stairways where people cannot keep a sufficient distance to pass each other*
- Dissemination of measurements at entrances, exits and exits with the aids listed above
- The dispatching of work over time during a working day is applied. This automatically has an impact on the number of people present
- Breaks are staggered, intermittent and not fortuitous

**For the different locations and situations listed below, the distance of 1.5 meters is not possible. That is why we take the following measures:**

- The modified schedules are in fact designed so that fewer people are present at the same time
- The break will be organized differently ...
- The workers concerned use the following protective equipment: masks and protective clothing. Read clearly and in advance the instructions for using the mask (note: instructions on masks, see appendix)
- Additional disinfection equipment and disposable towels are available at the following location ...

- Positioning Plexiglas on a line between the different workstations
- The reception /reception area is reorganized, for instance with partitions wall and screens, tele-reception, hand gels, ...
- *Adapt and complement these measures in the company context*

**Also during breaks, in the sanitary facilities and when changing clothes, workers keep the required distance, for which the following measures have been taken :**

- Breaks and schedules have been temporarily modified so that fewer people take a break at the same time
- The number of people at the same time in the canteen and in the locker rooms is limited to...  
The number of people in the sanitary areas is also limited and measures have been taken to maintain the distance
- It is essential to keep your distance in the canteen, by not sitting next to each other, but at an angle. The company has moved the chairs away, the workers must respect this
- It is essential to keep your distance in the smoking room. The number of people who can be in the smoking area at the same time is....
- In each room is clearly displayed the number of persons authorized to be present there
- The locker room benches were moved and markings were applied. Workers must leave the benches where they are and move according to the markings...
- The company has placed markings in several places: ribbons or physical barriers to delimit areas, traffic, to respect these markings
- Workers greet colleagues and outsiders from a distance

#### LIMITATION OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONS PRESENT

**The number of simultaneous participants is limited :**

- The number of participants is limited by adapting schedules and the distribution of breaks, indicating the maximum number of people in any one room, temporary additional entrances and exits, adapted parking facilities (including bicycle parking) *Adapt according to your situation*
- Movement within the company and production is limited to what is really necessary. The company has taken steps to change teams as efficiently as possible

### **The number of people present in the different spaces is limited :**

- Training and work meetings take place as much as possible in digital form. Start-up work meetings or toolbox meetings are held via a loudspeaker system in which everyone stays at their workplace and keeps their distance
- Training and physical meetings take place in a room that is sufficiently big and ventilated so that the distance of 1.5 meters is respected here as well...
- The maximum number of persons allowed in each room is indicated
- Lifts shall be used only when necessary. The number of persons in the elevator is limited to 2, again a sufficient distance is necessary
- Chairs are moved away from each other and excess chairs are removed
- It is important to avoid unnecessary visits to departments or locations where workers are not required to perform the work themselves
- According to the new rules, carpooling is only possible if an additional person is present. The person present is not next to the driver and is not immediately behind the driver

## FROM HOME TO WORK AND BACK HOME

### **Before leaving**

- Anyone who feels sick stays at home and informs the employer according to the rules applicable in the company
- Workers wash their hands before leaving home, upon arrival at work, when leaving work, and when arriving home

### **Transport**

- If you come to work by bike, electric scooter or on foot, keep a safe distance
- Those who do not come alone by car respect a minimum distance of 1.5 meters between each person during transportation. The number of people that can be transported therefore varies according to the type of vehicle
- It is recommended to ventilate and clean the car regularly.
- Those arriving by public transport (train, tramway, bus) follow the instructions of transport companies
- Public transportation organized by the employer: respect social distancing and if this is not possible, provide for separation and possibly use mouth masks in addition. Ensure that the ventilation and venting systems of the means of transport are working well and are properly maintained, and pay particular attention to the internal hygiene of vehicles used by different people

## HYGIENE AND CLEANING

### Hygiene measures and cleaning (also cleaning of highly frequented surfaces)

- There is plenty of soap, disinfectant gel, and disposable wipes for washing and drying hands
- Workers are required to wash their hands regularly, thoroughly, at the beginning and end of each shift, every hour, thoroughly. In addition, it is important that workers wash their hands when they leave their homes as well as when they arrive home
- Disposable gloves are provided. It is also important when using gloves to wash your hands regularly  
When using gloves, be careful when wearing them, removing them and throwing them away
- Workers who must sneeze or cough are required to use a tissue and dispose and throw it immediately in the garbage; and to wash or disinfect their hands immediately afterwards
- It is advisable not to touch your face
- Cleaning after each shift with special attention to high-traffic surfaces: Work rooms, locker rooms, sanitary facilities and break rooms are cleaned after each shift, with special attention to the additional cleaning of door handles, ramps, keyboards, screens, vending machines, work equipment (e.g. forklift trucks), drawers, washbasin taps, appliance control knobs and other objects that are touched. Workers also find disinfectant wipes in different workshops. *If possible, provide other modes of functioning, such as a touch screen pen. Or look into the possibilities of touch-free or elbow operation of doors, cupboards, etc..*
- Sufficiently leak-proof garbage are provided and cleaned daily, workers must use them
- Large rings are attached to the cables/tapes to open the separators, workers are asked to use the arm to open the separators
- Workers are required to open doors and gates with their arms and not with their hands
- Good and sufficient ventilation is provided in work spaces, locker rooms and sanitary areas (natural or mechanical ventilation). Do not use individual fans that may spread the virus
- Special attention was paid to appropriate protective equipment, cleaning products and instructions for cleaning workers

## MOVING IN THE WORKPLACE

### Reduce useless movement in the workplace

- Workers are only required to go to their workplaces, locker rooms and breaks.
- Access for visitors is limited to the areas they must pass through. The company asks them to stay in the truck. Toilets are provided for them. Outside drivers are not allowed to enter the loading areas.
- External places must also respect the rules of distance as well as hand and sneeze hygiene. Hand cleaning and disinfection is provided.

## ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

- If it has not been possible for the worker to take his body temperature, the employer, in agreement with his consultative organizations, may take measures so that they can do so before returning to the workplace and this in all discretion...
- *(Be careful, make sure you discuss this internally with your advisory bodies and workers and also consult the occupational doctor if you introduce this).* We ask you to check your body temperature upon arrival. Keep the thermometer 5 cm from your forehead. If your temperature is 37.5°C or higher, we will ask you to leave. The thermometer is constantly disinfected with the appropriate wipes.

## NEW WORKERS - OUTSIDERS – WORKING ON MOVE

### For new workers, including temporary agency workers:

- The company emphasizes that even in this time of crisis, for welcome new workers, including temporary workers, prevention and well-being in the workplace are essential. During this crisis, the reception of new workers also implies communication on "social distancing" guidelines.

### For outsiders

- The policy of social distancing is also important for outsiders, including those entering the workplace. It is important that the company informs them about the rules, and that managers encourage them to respect them. This applies both to outsiders who come to deliver or pick up products and to outsiders who are in charge of cleaning or maintenance, for example.
- Hygiene and protection measures are also applicable to the equipment of these external people that are used by the company's workers.
- Access by visitors is limited to areas where they must pass. The company asks them to stay in the truck. Toilets are provided for them. Outside drivers are not allowed to enter the loading areas.
- Visitors must also respect the rules of distance as well as hand and sneeze hygiene. Hand cleaning and disinfection products are provided.

### Working on the move

- Before starting of the work/services on move, clear agreements will be made with those in charge of the location where the work is to be performed. Workers will be informed in advance of the measures that will apply at that location. For instance, by a checklist.
- Workers use the work and protective equipment provided by the employer.

## PROCEEDING TO FOLLOW IF A PERSON PRESENTS SYMPTOMS IN THE WORKPLACE

*For your information: the FPS ETCS states: "Employers can, in dialogue with their internal prevention advisor or with the external service for prevention and protection at work, establish a procedure to*

*organize the transport of employees who get sick at work to their homes. In this event, they take into account as much as possible the recommendations below”:*

**If the worker has no more strength to go home, the reaction depends on his state of health:**

- If the worker seems to be seriously ill and his state of health is deteriorating rapidly, the manager will call for emergency. If necessary, they may take the sick worker to the hospital.
- For an worker who is less seriously ill and whom the manager does not want to leave at home alone, the manager will look for a solution in agreement with the family and/or maybe the family doctor.

**In order to prevent a worker who becomes ill in the workplace from infecting other workers, the company takes the following measures:**

- The company provides a room in which the sick person can be isolated when he or she cannot leave immediately.
- *(If the company has masks at work: ) The sick worker will be asked to put on a mask after washing and disinfecting hands.*  
*(If the company does not have masks: ) The sick worker will be asked to cover his mouth and nose with a cloth or scarf.*
- The company explicitly reminds to the worker the principles of good hygiene regarding sneezing and coughing and asks the worker to wash his hands before transportation.
- Any contact later with the worker is absolutely avoided and the worker is isolated..
- The company asks to contact your family doctor by phone, if necessary, the person in charge contacts the occupational doctor
- Then, the environment and work surfaces are cleaned and disinfected, also door handles and switches.
- The company informs the colleagues present about the measures taken.

## BACK TO WORK

***What happens if a person suspected of being infected with coronavirus returns to work?***

*For information: it is advisable to seek the general opinion of the company doctor, prevention advisor regarding the return of work at this time.*

- The proceeding for returning to work after a prior medical examination is applied. This means: compulsory for workers subject to medical monitoring compulsory after an absence of at least four consecutive weeks due to illness, accident or childbirth. This examination must take place at the earliest on the day of returning of work and at the latest on the tenth working day following the date of resumption.
- For other workers, the company also requests a visit to the company doctor before resuming work. The purpose is to enable the prevention consultant/company doctor to suggest to the

employer, as far as possible, an adaptation of the workstation before the returning at work of an employee, whether or not he is subject to health monitoring...

- The company reminds all workers, whether or not subject to health monitoring, their right to be considered for this visit..

## USE OF PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**When using of protective equipment, the directives for use must always be followed. In addition, the following rules apply:**

- The use of masks should not be an isolated measure but should always be considered in addition with other preventive measure.
- To have effect, masks must be worn correctly and regularly during the period of use. When used correctly, they have a role to play in preventing exposures.
- “Standard” or surgical masks provide a physical barrier and protect workers from risk such as splashes or large drops. These masks also capture particles or biological liquids emitted by the wearer. In this way, they also protect third parties from exposure caused by the wearer. In addition, they prevent the wearer from touching his or her mouth or nose. This type of mask is not personal protective equipment. They do not protect the wearer from inhaling small particles or drops containing viruses. They do not adhere perfectly to the face and their material does not filter out small particles.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment protects the wearer. Personal protective equipment is subject to strict standards setting out degrees of protection and they require risk analysis and user information and training.
- Remember that personal protective equipment is intended for use by one person only. They must not be used consecutively by several workers unless they are carefully cleaned, dusted and disinfected at each change of user. ( art. IX.2-19 Code of well-being at work).
- Also be sure to refer to the guidelines for wearing protective equipment:
  - Rational use of personal protective equipment concerning the coronavirus
  - Advice on the use of masks in public places, during home care and in a health care environment