

## Guidelines for the Prevention of COVID-19 Contamination for Fresh Produce Packing Houses

This document is intended to be used by fresh produce packing house operators as guidelines to prevent COVID-19 contamination. It is modified from COVID-19 and food safety: guidance for food businesses, Interim guidance 07 April 2020 by FAO / WHO and the special measures to control employee health and environment in food production facilities to prevent contamination of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in exported food products by the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. It is imperative for packing houses to reinforce personal hygiene measures and provide refresher training on food hygiene principles to eliminate or reduce the risk of food surfaces and food packaging materials becoming contaminated with the virus from food workers, as follows

1. Strictly implement GMPs which include good hygiene practices, cleaning and sanitation, zoning of operation areas, operational control, storage, distribution and transport, personal hygiene and fitness to work.
2. Appoint a person responsible for risk consideration and liaise with food safety authorities for advice. (Department of Agriculture and / or Ministry of Public Health)
3. Reinforce personal hygiene measures and provide refresher training on food hygiene principles to eliminate or reduce the risk of food surfaces and food packaging materials.

- Having screening measures for fever or COVID-19 symptoms before employees entering the workplace and keep records for traceability.

- Training the workers on knowledge in COVID-19 prevention such as screening methods, fever measurement, wearing masks, physical distancing, hand washing, cleaning methods, limit the number of staff.

4. Use proper personal protective equipment, face mask and gloves. When using disposable gloves, they must be changed frequently and hands must be washed between glove changes

and when gloves are removed. Gloves must be changed after carrying non-food related activities, such as opening / closing doors by hand, emptying bins.

5. Maintain at least 1 meter between fellow workers. Examples of practical measure to adhere to physical distancing guidance are to stagger workstation on either side of processing line so that workers are not facing one another, limit the number of staff in food preparation area, and organize staff into working groups to facilitate reduced interaction between groups.

6. Provide adequate hygiene facilities and maintain good staff hygienic practices include

- Having sufficient hand washing facilities, liquid soap or sanitizer, hand drying device such as tissue papers.

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, frequent use of alcohol-based sanitizers.

- Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues and wash hands.

- Frequent cleaning/disinfection of work surfaces and touch points.

- Avoiding close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness.

7. Staff need to be aware of symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever (high temperature - 37.5 degrees Celsius or above), cough, shortness of breath, fatigue. If employees have symptoms of COVID-19, follow measures of the Ministry of Public Health-Health screening measures for employees working at food production facilities to prevent contamination of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) in food products exported.

8. Clean frequently touched surfaces with alcohol-based sanitizer/surface disinfectants such as ethanol at a concentration of 70-80% or chlorine at a concentration of 0.05% (for general surfaces), at a concentration of 0.5% and leave for at least 15 minutes (For surfaces with secretions such as toilets).