

Alaska's Seafood Industry
Facts about Food Safety and COVID-19
11 March 2020

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the lead agency for the US government on 2019 novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19, and is the [primary source of guidance](#) regarding the spread of the virus.

This information is intended to be used as a basis for communication with external stakeholders about COVID-19 and the Alaska seafood industry.

Food Safety – Can the virus be spread through food?

- The CDC, FDA, USDA, and NOAA have not found that the COVID-19 virus can be spread through food.
- Alaska seafood is safe to eat and can be enjoyed without concern.
- Alaska seafood is a healthy source of essential vitamins and nutrients and eating Alaska seafood has been proven to support a healthy immune system.
- Everyone is encouraged to continue to follow proper food safety protocols including washing your hands for at least 20 seconds before consuming any food products.
- There is currently no evidence supporting the transmission of COVID-19 through food to humans.
- Coronaviruses experience poor survivability on food surfaces, meaning there is also, ***“no evidence to support transmission of [coronavirus through] imported goods and there have not been any cases of [coronavirus] in the United States associated with imported goods”¹*** from any country.
- There is likely **very low risk** of spread from *“food products [including seafood] or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.”²*
- The above statements are consistent with findings from both the United States [Food & Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#) and [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).

¹ Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>; “How to Protect Yourself”

² Centers for Disease Control <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>; “How It Spreads”

Additional Resources for Industry:

Where can I find additional resources to prepare my food business for the potential impacts of the COVID-19?

Food Marketing Institute (FMI) has compiled background information, a preparedness checklist, supply chain resources, templates and more to support the food industry, <https://www.fmi.org/food-safety/coronavirus>.

Where can I find talking points to share with counter staff and wait staff for my business or customers?

National Fisheries Institute (NFI) published talking points and FAQs regarding the safety and importance of including seafood in a healthy diet at <https://seafoodsafetycovid19.wordpress.com/>.

Where can I find information about COVID-19 specific to Alaska?

The State of Alaska Department of Health and Human Services is closely monitoring the situation, providing updates and preparedness recommendations and printable posters for Alaskans and Alaska businesses at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>.

Where can I find the CDC FAQs for more information?

This and other information and health and preparedness recommendations can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>.



This document was prepared as an informational resource for Alaska's seafood industry by the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI). This was not designed as an exhaustive resource but as a starting point for companies in their research. ASMI will continue to monitor the situation and provide information and resources as available.

About Alaska Seafood Processing

Alaska seafood processors have in place the highest food safety and sanitation standards³ required by the federal government and voluntarily apply additional strict protocols to implement industrial food safety best practices. Alaska's processing facilities are audited annually regarding these food safety measures by state and federal authorities.

As part of each plant's required preparedness plans, there are contingency mechanisms in place to deal with human disease outbreaks and other externalities so as to protect the health and safety of both employees and the public and guard against threats that could cause a disruption to plant and processing activities. Human health and food safety are always the priority.

³Alaska seafood processors adhere to the following federally required and audited food safety standards:

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) current Good Manufacturing Practices (FDA cGMP)

In Alaska's seafood processing facilities, the required Food and Drug Administration (FDA) current good manufacturing practices ([cGMP](#)) address concerns pertaining to the design, maintenance and sanitation of a facility as well as personal hygiene and disease control for plant workers.

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)

Processors of seafood and seafood products are required by the FDA to address food safety by following a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) prevention system. [HACCP](#) identifies food safety hazards, creates controls to prevent hazards, and then monitors those controls within a seafood processing facility.

Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs)

Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) are detailed procedures followed by Alaska's seafood processors specifying what to clean, how to clean, how often to clean, and the records used for monitoring. SSOPs are plant specific.