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## NCA Member Alert

# DHS: Food & Beverage Industry Considered Part of Nation's "Critical Infrastructure"

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Dear NCA Member:

**SUMMARY:** The Federal Government has issued clarifications regarding “critical” infrastructure and businesses, with the intention of helping local and state authorities make decisions as COVID-19 measures are implemented. Food and Beverage – retail, as well as restaurant carry-out and quick-serve - and the associated supply chains – are deemed to be part of the nation’s critical infrastructure. As COVID-19 measures are being designed and implemented locally, you should refer to this guidance from the Department of Homeland Security to address any local impediments to your operation – assuming, of course, that you are taking all necessary measures to protect the health of your employees and the public.

**BACKGROUND:** As COVID-19 measures are being drafted and adopted at the local and state level, including limitations on “public gatherings” and directives to “shelter-in-place,” there has existed the potential for confusion that could lead to interruptions of critical infrastructure. In the case of food and beverage, this could impede President Trump’s

assurance to the American public that grocery stores would remain stocked.

On Wednesday, [a coalition of industries sought clarification](#) that such directives would not interfere with the manufacture and delivery of essential foods, beverages, and consumer goods.

**NEWEST DEVELOPMENT:** The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) executes the Secretary of Homeland Security's responsibilities as assigned under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide strategic guidance, promote a national unity of effort, and coordinate the overall federal effort to ensure the security and resilience of the nation's critical infrastructure. There are 16 critical infrastructure sectors whose assets, systems, and networks - whether physical or virtual - are considered so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.

DHS has [just released guidance regarding these critical sectors](#). In part, that guidance specifies that the following are part of the U.S. critical infrastructure:

### *FOOD AND AGRICULTURE*

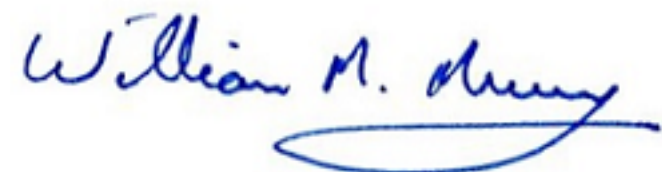
- *Workers supporting groceries, pharmacies and other retail that sells food and beverage products*
- *Restaurant carry-out and quick-serve food operations - Carry-out and delivery food employees*
- *Food manufacturer employees and their supplier employees—to include those employed in food processing (packers, meat processing, cheese plants, milk plants, produce, etc.) facilities; livestock, poultry, seafood slaughter facilities; pet and animal feed processing facilities; human food facilities producing by-products for animal food; beverage production facilities; and the production of food packaging*
- *Employees and firms supporting food, feed, and beverage distribution, including warehouse workers, vendor managed inventory controllers and blockchain managers.*

[From "[DHS CISA Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response Version 1.0](#)" (March 19,

2020)]

**ACTION:** This guidance may be used as part of your business continuity plan during this time of crisis when engaging with local or state officials; of course, being mindful first of public health and employee health and safety. For other related NCA resources, see our [resource page here](#).

Sincerely,



William "Bill" Murray  
President & CEO  
National Coffee Association of USA, Inc.

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