

RESTAURANT REOPENING SAFETY GUIDELINES



The restaurant industry suffered one of the heaviest blows from the coronavirus crisis when city and state officials across the country in mid-March announced executive orders to shut down all onsite-dining at restaurants. Some establishments were able to transition to a take-out-and-delivery model, while other establishments closed for business, furloughing many of their employees. The restaurant industry employs more than 11 million workers, representing almost seven percent of the American workforce.

With the gradual lifting of restrictions, businesses are looking to bounce back and rehire while assessing the viability of reopening safely. Following are several recommended practices to help mitigate exposure to the COVID-19 virus and keep restaurant employees and patrons safe, in accordance with the FDA and CDC:

Employees Health

- Emphasize that any employee who is sick should remain home.
- Employees with COVID-19-related symptoms should report them to their supervisor and follow CDC guidelines, including self-isolation.
- Instruct employees who are well, but suspect they have been exposed to COVID-19, to notify their supervisor and follow CDC-recommended precautions.
- Advise employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, if an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Consider performing temperature screening of employees prior to starting work. The minimum temperature that indicates a fever is 100°F, as per CDC guidance.
- Provide all employees with face coverings (masks), and require that they wear them at all times.
- Train all employees on strict hand-washing practices, including how and when to wash hands, on the use of hand sanitizers, and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.
- Make hand sanitizers available to employees.



Food Safety

- Ensure the person in charge of the restaurant's food is ServSafe-certified and certification is up to date.
- Provide refresher-training course to employees on food handling and safety, including the use of gloves to avoid direct bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods, and when preparing or eating food, to always wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- After months of being closed or operating take-out-and delivery service, organize storage areas including the walk-in refrigerator.
- Eliminate all out-of-date food.
- Discontinue operations, such as salad bars, buffets, and beverage service stations that require customers to use common utensils or dispensers. If they do remain open, put more robust sneeze guards in place. Change, wash and sanitize utensils frequently and place appropriate barriers in open areas.
- For "grab and go" service, stock coolers no more than at minimum levels.

Keeping the Facility Clean

- Thoroughly detail-clean and sanitize entire establishment, with a focus on high-contact areas commonly touched by employees and patrons.
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants.
- Clean and sanitize reusable menus. Paper menus should be discarded after each customer use.
- Clean and sanitize tables, condiment containers, digital-ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops and common-touch areas between each seating. Discard single-use items.
- Clean and sanitize restrooms regularly.
- Provide hand sanitizer to patrons.

Customer Safety

- Update the restaurant's layout, redesign seating arrangements, and ensure at least six feet of separation between each table to accommodate social distancing.
- Limit party size at each table as recommended by the CDC.
- Any social-distancing measures based on square footage should account for service areas as well as guest areas.
- Ensure third-party delivery drivers and suppliers are aware of the restaurant's internal distancing requirements.
- Post signage at the entrance that stipulates that no one with a fever or COVID-19 symptoms is permitted in the restaurant. Also, post signs regarding social distancing.
- Try not to let patrons gather in the waiting area or bar. Include outdoor floor markings to ensure social distancing.
- Limit unnecessary contact between servers and patrons.
- If possible, install Plexiglas barriers or partitions at registers.
- Use technology solutions whenever possible to reduce face-to-face interaction, including mobile ordering and menu tablets, text on arrival for seating and contactless payment options.

Be sure to update existing policies and operating procedures in accordance with the FDA, CDC, EPA and local and state guidelines.

Sources: FDA, CDC, National Restaurant Association

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