



# covid-19 reopening guide for food + beverage

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by

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# COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDE FOR FOOD + BEVERAGE

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we're all in this  
**TOGETHER**

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# FOREWORD

Your risk management partners and hospitality experts at Fournier Group have created this guide to provide you with current information and best practices on reopening your food and beverage establishment during COVID-19.

The guide applies to dine-in restaurants, brewpubs, breweries, bars, pubs, craft distilleries, and wineries in support of a clean and safe environment for employees and guests. Specifics covered:

- employee training, food safety, health and hygiene, cleaning and sanitation, equipment maintenance, and physical distancing<sup>1</sup>
- critical information from authoritative resources including the CDC and FDA websites<sup>2</sup>
- direction from the WHO, ECOLAB, ServSafe, academia, government, and industry

In developing this guide, we also looked at information disseminated by various countries, states, counties, and cities. Even though a lot of information is pertinent to the general population and addresses the global need for physical distancing, reopening guidelines vary by establishment type and location. It's important that you follow the guidelines set for your specific geography, industry, and risk profile.

While we now know when the majority of food and beverage establishments will be allowed to open across the country, we still do not know when they will be able to fully open or when they can get back to business as usual. We do know the pandemic is far from over. Until then, we must stay vigilant in following the guidelines set for us, being careful not to move faster than allowed—faster than what is considered safe.

As the pandemic continues, we must stay current on changes to public health guidance and state and local orders, along with the driving information provided by the CDC, EPA, FDA, WHO, and OSHA guidelines.

We are here for you—get in touch if we can help!

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<sup>1</sup> This guide is not meant to limit any employee rights, and it is not all-inclusive—it does not cover county health orders, and it is not a substitute for existing safety- and health-related requirements such as those established by state and federal OSHA regulations. OSHA has more comprehensive guidance [here](#).

<sup>2</sup> Find the FDA's guidance specific to restaurants [here](#) and the CDC's guidance for businesses and employers [here](#).

# QUICK REFERENCE

In a nutshell, for a safe and successful reopening, we recommend restaurants follow these 10 steps.

## 1 | know your guidelines

This includes all federal, state, and local regulations and guidelines on the timing and safety aspects of reopening, plus CDC/EPA guidelines on heightened cleaning regimens and all other regulatory mandates specific to the opening of your location.

## 2 | create a written plan

Develop and maintain a written COVID-19 prevention plan addressing all safety and health aspects of your operation.

## 3 | train employees

Employees must be trained in all aspects of working in a new environment—guest interaction, personal protective equipment measures, proper food handling, hygiene, and heightened cleaning protocols.

## 4 | promote + monitor proper hygiene

Employees need to be made aware of dramatically increased hygiene protocols, and supervisors need to carefully and consistently monitor compliance.

## 5 | equip facilities with hand sanitizer

Make hand sanitizer available in both front and back of house.

## 6 | make proper PPE readily available

Employees should follow all employer established guidelines for PPE, including masks and gloves. Additional PPE should be worn for chemical handling in accordance with the safety data sheets.

## 7 | establish control measures + screening

Make sure employees are doing temperature checks before coming to work each day and staying home if they feel sick or are exhibiting any symptoms.

## 8 | insist physical distancing guidelines are followed

Physical distancing is still mandated at 6 feet. Employees and guests should remain vigilant in this mandate.

## 9 | prioritize cleaning + disinfecting protocols

Cleaning and disinfecting all hard surfaces are now priority number one. Follow the [CDC guidelines](#) and [EPA-approved list of disinfectants](#).

## 10 | prepare hvac + plumbing

Create a strategic plan to ensure that all HVAC and plumbing equipment is clean, that critical supplies and filters are on hand, and that the systems are ready to operate under optimal conditions.

# GUIDELINES

## develop a covid-19 prevention plan

- Establish a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every location, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas, and designate a point person at each location to implement the plan.
- Train managers, employees and employee representatives, as necessary, in order to effectively implement and maintain the plan.
- Put into place all engineering and administrative controls necessary to maintain the proper physical distancing guidelines of 6 feet.
- Ensure that proper personal protective equipment is readily available and accessible, and that compliance with set policies are strictly adhered to.
- Regularly evaluate compliance with the plan, documenting and correcting any deficiencies identified.
- Identify contact information for the local health department for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among employees or guests.
- Adhere to the guidelines set forth below and throughout this document. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be further limited or even temporarily closed.

## train employees

- As referenced above, train employees on all aspects of the COVID-19 plan that will be important to their job functions.
- Provide information on COVID-19, how to prevent it from spreading, and which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
- Encourage and train in self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using the established CDC guidelines.
- Make sure they understand the importance of not coming to work if they have a cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with, are exhibiting the same symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Inform them to seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Ongoing updates and further details regarding symptomatology are available on the CDC website.

- Educate them in the importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when employees cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per CDC guidelines).
- Train and remind them as needed of the importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work (see *follow physical distancing parameters* section below).

## establish control measures + screening

- Require employees to do self-screening and temperature checks immediately prior to leaving home for their shifts. In accordance with CDC guidelines, the minimum temperature that indicates a fever is 100.4°F.
- Encourage employees who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Employers should provide and ensure that employees use all required PPE, including face coverings and gloves where necessary.
- Depending on your state and local regulations, face coverings are either mandated or strongly recommended when employees are in the vicinity of others. Employees should have face coverings available and wear them when at work, in offices, or in a vehicle during work-related travel with others. Face coverings must not be shared.
  - Face coverings can help protect people near the wearer but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing
  - Face coverings not authorized/certified by a regulatory agency (OSHA/ANSI/NIOSH) are not, by definition, PPE.
  - Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
  - Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Face coverings should be washed after each shift.
- Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for employees who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items. Employees should always wear gloves when handling items contaminated by body fluids, as outlined in the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, found in 29 CFR 1910.1030.
- Establishments must take reasonable measures, including posting signage in strategic and highly visible locations, to remind the public that they should use face coverings and practice physical distancing while waiting for service and takeout.
- Servers, bussers, and other employees moving items used by guests (dirty cups, plates, napkins, etc.) or handling trash bags should use disposable gloves (washing hands before putting them on and after removing them). The employer should also provide aprons that are changed frequently.

- Dishwashers should use equipment to protect the eyes, nose, and mouth from contaminant splash using a combination of face coverings, protective glasses, and/or face shields. Dishwashers must be provided impermeable aprons and change them frequently. Reusable protective equipment such as shields and glasses should be properly disinfected between uses and stored properly after use.

## prioritize cleaning + disinfecting protocols

- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas, such as guest waiting areas and lobbies, break rooms, lunch areas, and areas of ingress/egress including host stands, entryways, stairways, stairwells, escalators, handrails, and elevator controls.
- Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces including doors, door handles, crash bars, light switches, waiting area chairs, credit card terminals, ATM PIN pads, receipt trays, bus tubs, serving trays, water pitcher handles, phones, toilets, and handwashing facilities.
- Frequently clean items touched by guests, especially those that might attract contact from children, including candy and toy vending machines, decorative fish tanks, display cases, decorative fountains, and any other areas or items that may attract children at levels they can reach.
- Clean touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent, including but not limited to working surfaces, phones, registers, touchpads/touchscreens, tablets, timeclocks, appliances, utensils and implements, oven doors, grill and range knobs, carts and trolleys, keys, etc.
- Avoid sharing audio equipment, phones, tablets, laptops, desks, pens, and other work supplies wherever possible. Never share PPE.
- Discontinue shared use of audio headsets and other equipment between employees unless the equipment can be properly disinfected after use. When in doubt, consult equipment manufacturers to determine appropriate disinfection steps, particularly for more porous surfaces such as foam earmuffs.
- Provide time for employees to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the employees' job duties.
- Procure options for third-party cleaning companies to assist with the increased cleaning demand, as needed. Ensure that your cleaning protocols are taught and understood by third-party companies.
- Equip spaces such as dining rooms, bar areas, host stands, and kitchens with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes to all staff directly assisting guests.
- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times. Be sure to provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.

- When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should use products specifically approved for use against COVID-19 as outlined on the [EPA-approved list](#) and follow product use and storage instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. Provide employees training on manufacturer's directions and OSHA requirements under the Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) for safe use. Employees using cleaners or disinfectants should wear the PPE in accordance with the manufacturer-supplied safety data sheets.
- Restaurants should increase fresh air circulation by opening windows or doors, but only if possible and safe.
- Provide disposable menus to guests and, if possible, make menus available digitally so guests can view on a personal electronic device. If disposable menus cannot be provided, properly disinfect menus before and after each guest use. Consider options for guests to order ahead of time.
- Discontinue pre-setting tables with napkins, cutlery, glassware, foodware, etc. These items should be supplied individually to guests as needed or requested. Do not leave card stands, flyers, napkin holders, or other items on tables.
- Suspend use of shared food items such as condiment bottles, salt and pepper shakers, etc., opting instead, if possible, to provide these foods in single serve containers. Where not possible, shared items such as condiment bottles, shakers, etc. should be supplied as needed to guests and disinfected after each use.
- Pre-roll utensils in napkins prior to use by guests. Employees must wash hands before pre-rolling utensils in napkins. The pre-roll should then be stored in a clean container. After guests are seated, the pre-roll should be put on the table by an employee who recently washed their hands.
- Reusable guest items including utensils, food service ware, breadbaskets, etc. must be properly washed, rinsed, and sanitized. Cleaned flatware, stemware, dishware, etc. must be properly stored away from guests and employees until ready for use. Use disposable items if proper cleaning of reusable items is infeasible.
- Takeout containers must be filled by guests and available only upon request.
- Dirty linens used at dining tables such as tablecloths and napkins should be removed after each guest use and transported from dining areas in sealed bags. Employees should wear gloves when handling dirty linens.
- Thoroughly clean each guest dining location after every use. This will include disinfecting tables, chairs, booster seats, highchairs, booths, etc., and allowing adequate time for proper disinfection per product instructions. Many EPA-approved disinfectants require minimal contact time (seconds to one minute) against human coronavirus.



- Close all areas where guests may congregate or touch food or food service ware items that other guests may use. Provide these items to guests individually and discard or clean and disinfect after each use, as appropriate. This includes, for example,
  - Self-service areas with condiment/utensil caddies, napkins, lids, straws, water pitchers, to-go containers, etc.
  - Self-service machines including ice, soda, frozen yogurt dispensers, etc.
  - Self-service food areas such as buffets, salsa bars, salad bars, etc.
- Discontinue tableside food preparation and presentation such as food item selection carts and conveyor belts.
- Do not display after-meal mints, candies, snacks, or toothpicks for guests. Offer them with the check or provide only on request.
- Install hand sanitizer dispensers, touchless if possible, at guest and employee entrances and contact areas such as driveways, reception areas, in dining rooms, near elevator landings, etc.
- Discontinue use of shared entertainment items such as table/board games, pool tables, arcade games, vending machines, etc.
- Continue to follow existing safety codes regarding requirements for sanitizing (rather than disinfecting) food contact surfaces.

## follow physical distancing parameters

- Prioritize outdoor seating and curbside pickup to minimize crossflow of guests in enclosed environments. Restaurants can expand their outdoor seating and alcohol offerings in those areas, if they comply with local laws and regulations.
- Provide takeout, delivery, and drive-through options for guests when possible.
- Encourage reservations to allow for time to disinfect restaurant areas and provide guidance to guests for physical distancing while at the restaurant—via digital platforms, if possible.
- Consider allowing dine-in guests to order ahead of time to limit the time spent inside.
- Ask guests to wait in their cars or away from the establishment while waiting to be seated. If possible, alert guests through their mobile phones when their table is ready to avoid touching and use of buzzers that would have to be disinfected after each use.
- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet between employees and guests. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings or signs to indicate where employees and/or guests should stand).
- Install physical barriers or partitions at cash registers, bars, host stands, and other areas where maintaining physical distance of 6 feet is difficult.

- Any area where guests or employees queue should also be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing. This includes check-stands and terminals, deli counters and lines, restrooms, elevator lobbies, host stands and waiting areas, valet drop off and pickup areas, and any other area where guests congregate.
- Physical distancing protocols should be used in any office areas, kitchens, pantries, walk-in refrigerators and freezers, or other high-density, high-traffic employee areas.
- Face coverings are required where employees cannot maintain physical distancing including all back of house areas, kitchens, storage areas, etc.
- Employee pre-shift meetings and trainings should be conducted virtually or in areas that allow for appropriate physical distancing between employees.
- Food, beverages, food service ware, etc. should not be shared between employees.
- Stagger employee breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.
- Reconfigure office spaces, lobbies, beverage bars, kitchens and workstations, host stand areas, and other spaces wherever possible to allow for at least 6 feet of distance between people dining, working, and passing through areas for entry and exit.
- Remove tables and chairs from dining areas so that 6 feet of physical distance can be maintained for guests and employees. If tables, chairs, booths, etc. cannot be moved, use visual cues to show that they are not available for use or install plexiglass or other types of impermeable physical barriers to minimize exposure between guests.
- Discontinue seating of guests where guests cannot maintain 6 feet of distance from employee workstations and food and drink preparation areas.
- Adjust maximum occupancy rules inside the establishment based on its size to limit the number of people inside and/or use impermeable barriers between service tables to protect guests from each other and employees. For outdoor seating, maintain physical distancing standards outlined above.
- Limit the number of guests at a single table to a household unit or guests who have asked to be seated together. People in the same party seated at the same table do not have to be 6 feet apart. All members of the party must be present before seating, and hosts must bring the entire party to the table at one time.
- Limit the number of employees serving individual parties, in compliance with wage and hour regulations.
- If necessary, modify breakrooms, use barriers, or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate employees and discourage congregating during breaks. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.

- Reconfigure kitchens to maintain physical distancing in those areas where practical and, if not practical, stagger shifts, if at all possible, to get the work done ahead of time.
- Discourage food preparation employees from changing or entering others' workstations during shifts.
- Discourage employees from congregating in high traffic areas such as bathrooms, hallways, bar areas, reservation and credit card terminals, etc.
- Establish directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic, if possible, to eliminate employees from passing by one another within a distance of 6 feet.
- Require employees to avoid handshakes, hugs, and similar greetings that break physical distance.
- Eliminate person-to-person contact for delivery of goods whenever possible. Designate drop-off locations to receive deliveries away from high traffic areas. Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet with delivery drivers.
- Guests should enter through doors that are propped open or automated, if possible. Hand sanitizer should be available for guests who must touch door handles.
- Implement peak period queueing procedures, including a host to remind guests to queue with at least 6 feet of distance between parties outside or inside waiting areas.
- Employees should not open the doors of cars or taxis.
- Takeout food items should be made available using contactless pickup and delivery protocols.
- Avoid touching others' pens and clipboards. If possible, install transfer aiding materials, such as shelving and bulletin boards, to reduce person-to-person hand-offs.

## prepare hvac + plumbing

- Prior to opening a building and in accordance with ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers), create a strategic plan that includes all HVAC and plumbing maintenance necessary to ensure system readiness and proper safety for all occupants. This will include supply chain availability of critical items such as filters and communication plans for building support and safety measures.
- If the building opening takes place when PPE requirements are still in place, [ASHRAE's occupancy guides](#) can be referenced to deal with functioning buildings during the pandemic.
- Review HVAC programming to provide flushing two hours before and after occupancies. This includes operating the exhaust fans as well as opening the outside air dampers.
- For buildings without the capacity to treat large quantities of outside air and when outside air conditions are moderate, open all windows for a minimum of two hours before reoccupation.

- If at all possible, improve central air filtration to the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal the edges of the filter to limit bypass.
- Ensure that custodial scope includes proper cleaning procedures built from EPA and CDC guidance on approved products and methods:
  - Disinfect high-touch areas of HVAC and other building service systems (e.g., on/off switches and thermostats).
  - Disinfect the interior of all reach-in and walk-in refrigeration units where the virus can potentially survive for longer periods of time.
- Professionally clean and sanitize the exhaust hoods. This will remove not only the grease, but also all other molds, dust, and potential airborne pathogens, thereby minimizing any potential respiratory risks.
- A decrease in water usage in buildings closed or with limited access during the pandemic can increase the risk of bacteria growth in building plumbing and associated equipment. When reopening these buildings, make sure you consult with a licensed plumbing contractor to ensure sanitization and safety.
- Clean and sanitize all ice machines. Ice is considered food, and ice machines are traditionally a high-touch area. Professional deep cleaning and sanitation, in conjunction with new low-touch action plans, will promote greater safety measures.
- For more information, consult [ASHRAE's Guidance for Building Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

**Guide questions?** Get in touch with us—800 851 3237 | [info@fourniergroup.com](mailto:info@fourniergroup.com).