

# *southcarolina* **STR****NG**

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**GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**



## South Carolina – Opening Restaurants Phase One Recommendations

The guidelines detailed in this plan are driven by three major considerations: safety, gradual and phasing in. We respectfully submit the balanced and strategic approach using best practices is the optimal approach for the state – our fellow citizens and our guests.

In that spirit we suggest opening restaurant outdoor dining areas on May 4 with their being treated the same as takeout, curbside service and delivery from the regulation standpoint. Following with restaurants including dine-in areas to open the week of May 11 as described below.

During the Phase One of restaurants opening in South Carolina, it is suggested that the following steps are adhered to until the data demonstrates these requirements can be relaxed and recommendations from CDC/FDA/DHEC before moving on to subsequent phases. Phase Two should experience an increase in customer counts in restaurants, and Phase Three could mean decreasing social distance and face mask wearing in restaurants, but this won't be clear until it is demonstrated that Phase One can be done successfully.

Prior to reopening, it is critical that every restaurant intending to reopen evaluate their inventory, review their food safety certification and procedures to ensure they can open in compliance with SC Food Safety regulations, and do a deep re-clean and sanitize the entire restaurant facility using the CDC-recommended guidelines during COVID-19.

South Carolina is committed to following the protocols established by Governor McMaster regarding safe social distancing and this heightened awareness of public safety. South Carolina's restaurant industry is waiting for the return of its guests and, in the meantime, we are preparing for the reopening by suggesting doing the following things to **welcome customers**:

- Post a sign on the door to your restaurant that no one with a fever or persistent cough is to be permitted in the restaurant.
- Provide signage at each public entrance to inform all employees and customers that they should:
  - Not allowed to enter if they feel generally unwell
  - Maintain a minimum of 6-foot distance
  - Sneeze or cough into a cloth or tissue
  - Not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact
- Post a sign on receiving door that no suppliers or vendors should enter if they have a fever or persistent cough.

**Furthermore, we are recommending the following “best practices” for reassuring your customers of your commitment to their safety while dining:**

- Post in a publicly prominent place in your facility and on your website your commitment to:
  - Food safety
  - Staff safety training
  - Steps that you are taking to go above and beyond in providing safe food and a safe, enjoyable dining experience
  - Customer safety
  - Customer responsibility
- Create, execute and post publicly a full scale ‘ready for dine-in’ cleaning and sanitizing protocol in preparation for welcoming customers.

**We recommend the following steps be followed in order to safely open back up and build the trust of our customers in this unique and trying time in our history:**

**Training:**

- Continue and enhance employee safety training, highly emphasizing proper hand washing and hygiene etiquette.
- Encourage restaurants to bring in staff at least one week prior to opening for the purpose of training, cleaning, building inventory, etc.
- All restaurants are required to meet the minimum education and training standards outlined in DHEC Regulation 61-25. At least one employee with the authority to direct and control food preparation and service shall be a food protection manager who has been certified by an accredited program. Only Conference for Food Protection ANSI-certified Food Protection Manager courses meet the requirements of 2-102.20
- All restaurants are encouraged to have their employees complete a DHEC-approved Food Handler training and all managers earn their Conference for Food Protection ANSI-certified Food Protection Manager certification.
- For those operations with carry out and delivery service, have employees take the Free ServSafe COVID-19 training for carryout and delivery service.

**Restaurant Dining Room Focus:**

- Create a plan and checklist of all back of house and front of house surfaces the staff and customers will come in contact with.
- Select one person per shift to be in charge of safety and sanitation during the shift, observing and ensuring that hand washing is done appropriately, and sanitation of dining

room areas, restrooms, lobbies and door areas is done regularly and consistently (minimum of hourly).

- Restaurants already have sanitization regulations that need to continue to be adhered to based on regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments. .
- Install touchless hand sanitizers at all entry doors if availability permits. At your main entrance, provide a cleaning station with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and a trash can for visitors.
- Use sanitizing solutions to clean tables, chairs, and check presenters after each seating. Clean and sanitize salt and pepper fixtures or use single use condiments. Use paper menus if possible or sanitize menus after each use.
- Sanitize all doorknobs and other frequently touched surfaces as much as possible between newly arriving parties with approved sanitizing solution.
- Cleaning supplies should be single use (paper towels, disposable mop heads) or laundered between uses (dish towels, mop heads).
- Space tables, if possible, at least six feet apart. If not possible, seat tables in rotation, or block seats. Utilize outdoor seating if possible. Reduce seating in dining rooms to the appropriate level based on square footage and layout of the dining room.
- No more than eight customers at a table during Phase 1 of the reopening of our restaurants.
- Manual or digital reservation system would be helpful to be more efficient with table seating. Have diners wait for tables in cars or outdoors using social distancing regulations rather than congregating in your dining room. Text them when their table is available.
- If there is any waiting outside the restaurant or at the counter, tape or markings should be used to monitor six feet physical distance.
- If not already standard operating procedures, have sanitization check lists for restrooms and other public areas.
- Set up guidelines for server stations so they are not congregating together. Depending on the size of the restaurant, consider having a station for each server.
- During routine business hours, frequently and thoroughly clean and disinfect all frequently touched objects within the dining and customer areas (doorknobs, cabinet handles, handrails, light switches, kitchen counters, dining room tables).
- Deep clean and disinfect the entire facility during non-operational hours at least five times per week.
- Only use kiosks or touch screens if they can be sanitized between uses, encourage touchless payment operations like credit cards with no signature required.

- Do not place utensils on table until patron is seated and, if possible, use disposable single-use utensils.
- In self-service seating restaurants, signage should be placed on tables/booths which are not to be occupied so that proper social distancing can be maintained.
- Remove bar stools or maintain a 6' distance between each to allow people to order drinks at the bar and sit using appropriate social distancing.

#### **Food Safety Focus:**

- Place settings, utensils, menus, and condiments will either be single-use or will be cleaned and disinfected after every use.
- Continue to clean and sanitize food preparation surfaces in the kitchen and other food storage areas at the frequency required by R. 61-25.
- Buffets and self-service stations: Have staff dispense food from buffets (cafeteria-style) or discontinue these services to prevent customer reuse of service utensils and potential physical contamination.
- Have sanitizer or another disinfectant readily available to all guests and employees.
- Thoroughly disinfect every table, chair/booth, utensil, glass, and surface the guest has contacted.
- Staff should wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after cleaning and disinfecting is completed. Ensure that staff properly wash their hands immediately after gloves are removed.

#### **Employee Safety Focus:**

- Each employee will pass a health check or health survey prior to each shift.
- Heightened hygienic practices including peer observation and supervisor oversight to ensure staff are washing hands frequently and correctly, gloves may be used and must be changed properly, and that staff avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- It is recommended that fast food and fast casual restaurants have Plexi-glass between cashiers and customers as well as pick up areas and customers.
- If possible, host stands should also have a plexiglass barrier between staff and guests.
- Constant interaction (before each shift) with staff on their health status and the health of anyone with whom they may be in close contact (family members, roommates, etc.).

- Immediately exclude any staff members indicating symptoms or that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone diagnosed COVID-19.
- Ensure staff do NOT share cups and eating utensils with others.
- If possible, all employees handling food should wear gloves and wear masks during Phase One. This is not just for the safety of our guests, but also for their psychological sense of safety.
- Employees should be allowed to wear gloves and masks if they so desire, even in front-of-the-house positions and in the restaurant environments when a six-foot social distancing area in the kitchen and front counter area would be difficult to maintain. Employees in full-service dining rooms will be given the option but are encouraged to wear masks and gloves.

#### **Customer Safety Focus:**

- Discontinue services that allow customers to fill or refill their own beverage cups such as coffee cups or growlers.
- Plan ahead of time for a circumstance in which you'll need to expedite a guest's exit from your restaurant.
- Be prepared to put guests in touch with medical resources.

**The following sections are requested to promote the revitalization of the restaurant industry through education, marketing and government relief programs.**

#### **Customer Responsibilities:**

- If you have been exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough, or shortness of breath, please help us keep everyone safe by using our contactless medical health delivery systems.
- If you have underlying health conditions that make you a more vulnerable patron, please use our contactless medical health delivery systems.

#### **Marketing and Promotion:**

- Promote to the local community that employees are well-versed in the importance of personal health and hygiene and that they understand the critical importance of cleanliness and sanitation of the establishment.

- Encourage SCPRT to launch an extensive ad campaign within a reasonable drive market radius.
- Encourage the establishment of localized hospitality industry employment websites

**We also recommend the following actions by the government at local, state and federal levels in order to help promote the reopening of the restaurants and thereby one of the economic engines of our state and country.**

**Government:**

- The state should consider indemnifying restaurant owners who follow the guidelines from lawsuits predicated on transmission of COVID-19 to guests or employees.
- Possibly provide restaurants with restart grants in the amount of 2x the gross receipts tax paid over the previous 12-month period (Feb 2019 - Feb 2020).
- Suspend Gross Receipts Tax.
- Pursue relief to businesses that demonstrate hardship regarding the payment of fees (including alcohol beverage control fees, permit fees, inspection fees and business license fees).
- Defer all non-essential regulatory changes
- Freeze unemployment insurance rates.
- Defer Insurance premiums for 90 days for general liability, worker's compensation and health insurance policies.
- Enact the Restaurant and Foodservice Industry Recovery Fund (RFIRF).
- Replenish funding and fix the structural issues of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).
- Create a "Healthy Restaurants" Tax Credit or Grant Program.
- Enact the "SNAP COVID-19 Anti-Hunger Restaurant Relief for You Act of 2020".
- Increase funding for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs).
- Allow restaurants to continue off-premise alcohol sales with food to go orders.



## Hospitality Industry Resilience Task Force

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NATIONAL  
**RESTAURANT**  
ASSOCIATION



COVID-19

# REOPENING GUIDANCE

A GUIDE FOR THE  
RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

**PUBLISHED** April 22, 2020

For other resources  
[RESTAURANT.ORG/COVID19](https://www.restaurant.org/COVID19)





## TO RESTAURANT OPERATORS GETTING READY TO REOPEN...

**The purpose of guidance is just that, to offer you direction and provide a framework for best practices as you reopen.**

But as the saying goes, the devil is in the details, and not every restaurant is the same and not every opening scenario will align. We recognize that not everyone has access to guidance, and that is where the National Restaurant Association can provide help.

- Make sure your person-in-charge has an up-to-date ServSafe Food Manager certification. The Food and Drug Administration requires every facility to have a person in charge on site during open hours and also directs that the person in charge should have a food manager certification.
- Provide ServSafe food handler training for your workers. They're your front line, educating them protects them, you and your guests.
- Make technology your friend. Contactless payment systems, automated ordering systems, mobile ordering apps, website updates and simple texts can help you to communicate and conduct business with reduced need for close contact. As you begin to reopen, keep communicating with customers (your hours, menu items, reservations, etc.), and help promote your social distancing and safety efforts.
- And some of the best advice comes from the Food and Drug Administration, which develops the Food Code we all rely on. Its newest guide, *Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, was just released. You can link to it [here](#).

As we continue to learn more about operating businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important to share with you the most current direction and advice from the experts at FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies. These documents will continue to reflect those best practices and will continue to be updated.

## REOPENING GUIDANCE TASK FORCE

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**T**he National Restaurant Association partnered with representatives of the Food and Drug Administration, academia, the Conference for Food Protection, Ecolab, public health officials and industry representatives to develop a set of opening and operating guidelines to help restaurants return to full operation safely when the time comes.

This guidance is designed to provide you with a basic summary of recommended practices that can be used to help mitigate exposure to the COVID-19 virus, including:

- ✓ Food safety
- ✓ Cleaning and sanitizing
- ✓ Employee health monitoring and personal hygiene
- ✓ Social distancing

Combine this guidance with your existing policies as well as this new resource from the FDA, *Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic*.

Armed with information, ServSafe training and the recommendations of your local health departments, you can help secure a safe opening.

For the most comprehensive and up-to-date COVID-19 resources and information for the restaurant industry, visit [restaurant.org/COVID19](https://restaurant.org/COVID19).

RETURNING  
RESTAURANTS  
TO SERVICE

**SAFELY**





COVID-19

# RESTAURANT RESPONSE

Food safety has always been a priority for the restaurant industry, for both guests and employees.

The basis of an effective food safety culture is the Food and Drug Administration Food Code, which the industry has served as the foundation for restaurant operating procedures as they relate to safe food handling. The guidance outlined in the Food Code is science-based and is designed to reduce and prevent the incidence of foodborne illness. Food Code requirements related to sanitation and personal hygiene is critical and the most relevant protocols available to combat risks related to the spread of COVID-19.

Local, state and federal regulators use the Food Code as a model to develop or update their own food safety rules and to be consistent with common food regulatory policy.

## AMONG THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FOOD CODE THAT APPLY TO CORONAVIRUS MITIGATION ARE

- ✓ Prohibiting sick employees in the workplace
- ✓ Strict handwashing practices that include how and when to wash hands
- ✓ Strong procedures and practices to clean and sanitize surfaces
- ✓ Ensuring the person in charge of a foodservice facility is a certified food safety manager
- ✓ Ensuring the person in charge is on site at all times during operating hours



FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, THE NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION'S SERVSAFE PROGRAM HAS PROVIDED FOOD SAFETY TRAINING FOR BOTH MANAGERS AND FOOD HANDLERS.

ServSafe certifies food safety managers through an independently developed certification exam, which follows standards adopted by the Conference for Food Protection.

The Conference for Food Protection also collaborates with the FDA to develop the Food Code.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE IS TO BUILD ON THE ALREADY ESTABLISHED BEST PRACTICES AND REQUIREMENTS AVAILABLE

that address specific health and safety concerns related to the spread of COVID-19, and to put those protocols into practice as state and local officials begin to open communities and businesses.

Operators should make use of these guidelines as they relate to their existing policies and procedures and in conjunction with instructions they receive from authorities during their reopening phase-in.



## REOPENING GUIDANCE **FOR EMPLOYERS**

State and local officials may tailor the application of opening criteria to local circumstances (e.g., metropolitan areas that have suffered severe COVID outbreaks vs. rural and suburban areas where outbreaks have not occurred or have been mild).

To prepare to comply with opening procedures, operators should update their existing policies and operating procedures in accordance with the latest FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Environmental Protection Agency guidance and in accordance with local and state officials regarding:

- ✓ Social distancing and protective equipment
- ✓ Employee health
- ✓ Cleaning/sanitizing/disinfecting

## **ON FOOD SAFETY**

- ✓ Discard all food items that are out of date.
- ✓ Where salad bars and buffets are permitted by local/state officials, they must have sneeze guards in place. Change, wash and sanitize utensils frequently and place appropriate barriers in open areas. Alternatively, cafeteria style (worker served) is permissible with appropriate barriers in place.
- ✓ If providing a "grab and go" service, stock coolers to no more than minimum levels.
- ✓ Ensure the person in charge is ServSafe certified and that their certification is up to date, and provide food handler training to refresh employees.



# REOPENING GUIDANCE **FOR CLEANING AND SANITIZING**

✓ Thoroughly detail-clean and sanitize entire facility, especially if it has been closed. Focus on high-contact areas that would be touched by both employees and guests. Do not overlook seldom-touched surfaces. Follow sanitizing material guidance to ensure it's at effective sanitizing strength and to protect surfaces.

✓ Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants.

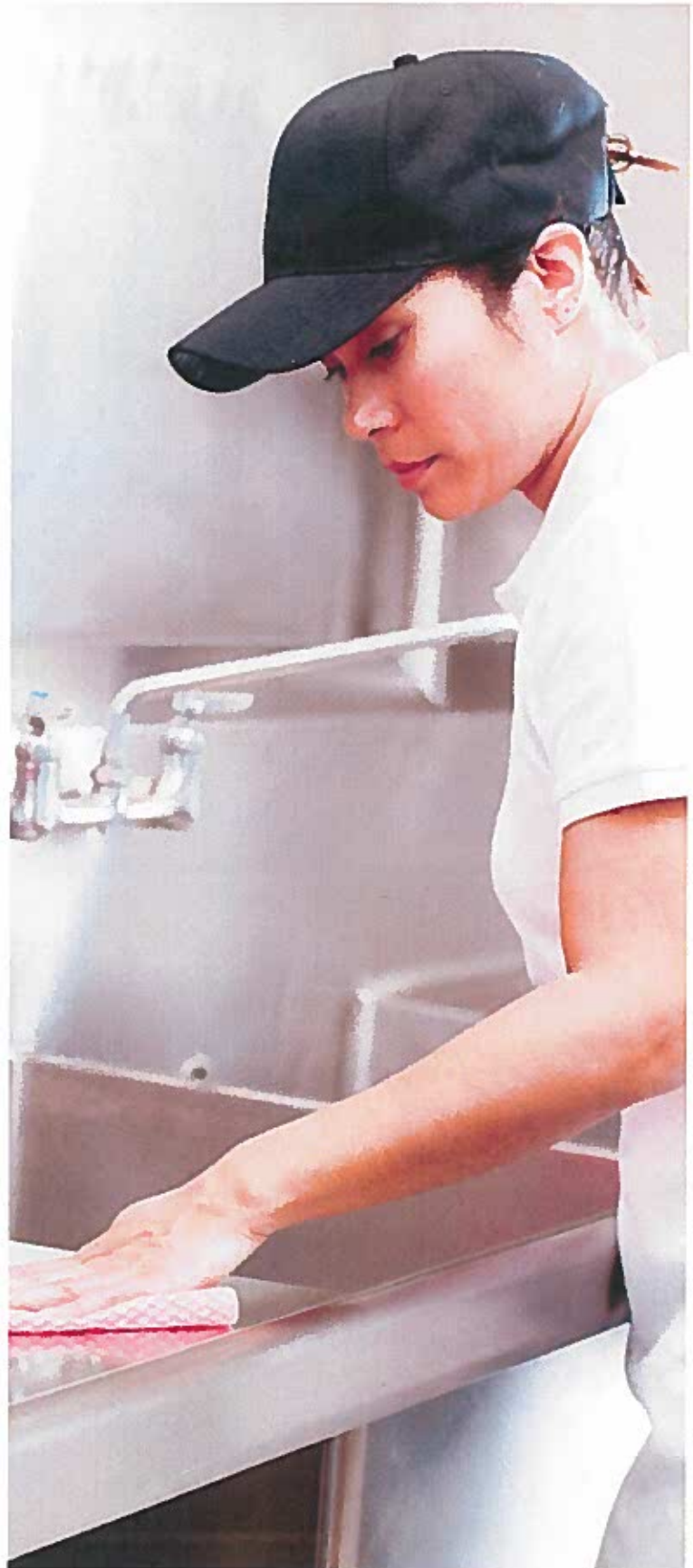
✓ Between seatings, clean and sanitize table condiments, digital ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops, and common touch areas. Single-use items should be discarded. Consider using rolled silverware and eliminating table presets.

✓ Remove lemons and unwrapped straws from self-service drink stations.

✓ Clean and sanitize reusable menus. If you use paper menus, discard them after each customer use. Implement procedures to increase how often you clean and sanitize surfaces in the back-of-house. Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants.

✓ Check restrooms regularly and clean and sanitize them based on frequency of use.

✓ Make hand sanitizer readily available to guests. Consider touchless hand sanitizing solutions.





## REOPENING GUIDANCE

# ON MONITORING EMPLOYEE HEALTH & PERSONAL HYGIENE

✓ Per existing FDA Food Code requirements, employees who are sick should remain at home.

✓ If an employee becomes ill or presents signs of illness, the operator should identify the signs during a pre-work screening and follow the business's established policies on when the ill employee is allowed to return to work. At a minimum, however, follow CDC guidelines – tell the employee to self-isolate for seven days from the onset of symptoms and be symptom-free for three days without medication.

✓ Taking employees' temperatures is at the operators' discretion. The CDC has not mandated taking an employee's temperature and any operator who chooses to do so should engage health officials first and adopt policies aligned with proper procedures. CDC guidance states the minimum temperature that indicates a fever is 100°F.

✓ Per CDC recommendations, face coverings have been shown to be effective tools to mitigate risk from individuals who show symptoms as well as those who don't, especially in close environments where it's hard for people to maintain a three- to six-foot distance. In some states and local jurisdictions, face coverings are required by government officials; some employers require them, too. In all cases, those coverings worn by employees should be kept clean in accordance with CDC guidance. CDC provides overall cleaning guidance [here](#).

✓ Train all employees on the importance of frequent hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content, and give them clear instruction to avoid touching hands to face.



## REOPENING GUIDANCE

# ON SOCIAL DISTANCING

- ✓ Update floor plans for common dining areas, redesigning seating arrangements to ensure at least six feet of separation between table setups. Limit party size at tables to no more than the established "maximums approved" as recommended by CDC or approved by local and state government. Where practical, especially in booth seating, physical barriers are acceptable. Consider a reservations-only business model or call-ahead seating to better space diners.
- ✓ Any social distancing measures based on square footage should take into account service areas as well as guest areas.
- ✓ Remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers that you have internal distancing requirements.
- ✓ Post signage at the entrance that states that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is to be permitted in the restaurant.
- ✓ Limit contact between waitstaff and guests. Where face coverings are not mandated, consider requiring waitstaff to wear face coverings (as recommended by the CDC) if they have direct contact with guests.
- ✓ If practical, physical barriers such as partitions or Plexiglas barriers at registers are acceptable.
- ✓ Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction: mobile ordering and menu tablets; text on arrival for seating; contactless payment options.

- ✓ Provide hand sanitizer for guests to use, including contactless hand sanitizing stations, and post signs reminding guests about social distancing. Thank them for their patience as you work to ensure their safety.

- ✓ Try not to allow guests to congregate in waiting areas or bar areas. Design a process to ensure guests stay separate while waiting to be seated. The process can include floor markings, outdoor distancing, waiting in cars, etc. Consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance. Determine ingress/egress to and from restrooms to establish paths that mitigate proximity for guests and staff.

- ✓ Where possible, workstations should be staggered so employees avoid standing directly opposite one another or next to each other. Where six feet of separation is not possible, consider other options (e.g., face coverings) and increase the frequency of surface cleaning and sanitizing.

*Note: Face coverings may be required by government officials and/or restaurant operators to mitigate the distancing gap. If not mandated, face coverings are recommended by CDC and, when worn, they should be cleaned daily according to CDC guidance.*

- ✓ Limit the number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms.
- ✓ With larger staffs, use communication boards to or digital messaging to convey pre-shift meeting information.



# BEST PRACTICES

## FOR RETAIL FOOD STORES, RESTAURANTS & FOOD/PICK-UP DELIVERY SERVICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FDA is sharing information about best practices to operate restaurants, retail food stores and associated pick-up and delivery services during the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard workers and consumers.

This addresses key considerations for how foods offered can be safely handled and delivered to the public. This is not a comprehensive list. FDA encourages consulting the references and links provided below (by CDC, FDA, EPA, and OSHA) for more detailed information. This will be updated as FDA receives further information and inquiries.

- [Managing Employee Health \(Including Contracted Workers\)](#)
- [Personal Hygiene for Employees](#)
- [Managing Operations in a Foodservice Establishment or Retail Food Store](#)
- [Managing Food Pick-Up and Delivery](#)

### BE HEALTHY, BE CLEAN



- Employees - Stay home or leave work if sick, consult doctor if sick, and contact supervisor
- Employers - Instruct sick employees to stay home and send home immediately if sick
- Employers - Pre-screen employees exposed to COVID-19 for temperature and other symptoms



- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer per CDC
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Wear mask/face covering per [CDC](#) & [FDA](#)



- Never touch Ready-to-Eat foods with bare hands
- Use single service gloves, deli tissue, or suitable utensils
- Wrap food containers to prevent cross contamination
- Follow 4 steps to food safety [Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill](#)

### CLEAN & DISINFECT



- Train employees on cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and protective measures, per CDC and FDA
- Have and use cleaning products and supplies
- Follow protective measures



- Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently
- Use EPA-registered disinfectant
- Ensure food containers and utensils are cleaned and sanitized



- Prepare and use sanitizers according to label instructions
- Offer sanitizers and wipes to customers to clean grocery cart/basket handles, or utilize store personnel to conduct cleaning/sanitizing

### SOCIAL DISTANCE



- Help educate employees and customers on importance of social distancing:
  - Signs
  - Audio messages
  - Consider using every other check-out lane to aid in distancing



- Avoid displays that may result in customer gatherings; discontinue self-serve buffets and salad bars; discourage employee gatherings
- Place floor markings and signs to encourage social distancing



- Shorten customer time in store by encouraging them to:
  - Use shopping lists
  - Order ahead of time, if offered
- Set up designated pick-up areas inside or outside retail establishments

### PICK-UP & DELIVERY



- If offering delivery options:
  - Ensure coolers and transport containers are cleaned and sanitized
  - Maintain time and temperature controls
  - Avoid cross contamination, for example, wrap food during transport



- Encourage customers to use "no touch" deliveries
- Notify customers as the delivery is arriving by text message or phone call



- Establish designated pick-up zones for customers
- Offer curbside pick-up
- Practice social distancing by offering to place orders in vehicle trunks



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