

Planning for Reopening Food Service Establishments As COVID-19 Impacts Best Practices and Protocol



The Association of Food and Drug Officials is sharing guidance and resources to help food service plan for reopening. This document is not all encompassing but provides some ideas for planning to return to partial and eventually full operation as restrictions are removed. Each operation may need to modify this guidance based on their jurisdiction. It is important to do this preliminary work now so operators can focus on cooking and serving once the doors are open.

Now is the time for planning and doing in preparation of the return of customers to your operation. Following these recommendations, see a list of links to detailed guidance. IMPORTANT NOTE: Be sure to contact your local health authority for information on specific reopening inspection requirements.

Front-of-House

- Consider the menu items including how menu is delivered to customers, i.e. dispose of paper menus, move menu online. Given the reduced nature of operations, limit menu until you know more about demand.
- Re-engineer your physical spaces to accommodate different levels of distancing. Don't wait until you can open to begin figuring out where, how, and how many tables and chairs to remove from the dining room and where to store the excess items.
- Deep cleaning and disinfecting following CDC guidelines and hitting all high touchpoints both front and back-of-house.
- Figure out ways to implement friction-less or touchless payment, such as cellphone transactions.
- Design your signage for front and back of the house.
- Consider a reservations-only business model for greater control of customer volume. Consider allowing customers to pre-order while making reservations to decrease the length of time they are in the establishment.
- Figure out how you will stagger the waiting line and redesign the waiting area to maintain social distancing.



Back-of-House

- Dispose of any food product no longer in good condition.
- Verify your suppliers and items needed are available and ensure your suppliers are abiding by the guidelines for operating during the pandemic.
- Design or re-engineer the production flow in the back of the house to create space between workers, stagger work stations, impose physical barriers, ensure adequate handwashing and sanitizing, etc.

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Employees and Employee Health and Policy

- Revise your sick policy to establish COVID-19 specific protocols for employee health such as reviewing symptoms daily, taking temperatures, and design the medical questionnaire if you intend to use one or are required to.
- Write your face covering policy and, if providing face coverings for staff, order them now. Refer to FDA & CDC guidance that follows for face coverings.
- Determine what staff can return to work based on guidance about exposure of COVID-19 in their own environment since you closed.
- Zoom or Skype type calls with staff and retrain them according to the new protocols, focusing on complete handwashing and cleaning touchpoints. Once you are open, it will be more difficult to find time for training.



Additional Guidance

- **General Information for Retail Food Businesses**
 - <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19>
 - http://www.afdo.org/resources/Documents/COVID19/NRA_REOPEN_GUIDANCE.PDF
 - <http://www.afdo.org/resources/Documents/COVID19/COVID-Reopening-Criteria1-Final-4.22.20.pdf>
 - <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/use-respirators-facemasks-and-cloth-face-coverings-food-and-agriculture-sector-during-coronavirus>
- **Deep Clean and Disinfecting**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- **Employee Questioning and Temperature Assessment for Health and Safety**
 - The EEOC has (as of March 27, 2020) confirmed that it is permissible to ask workers if they have:
 - Been diagnosed with or otherwise tested positive for COVID-19;
 - Recently displayed any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, (e.g., cough, fever, shortness of breath);
 - Recently traveled from an area with heightened community transmission; or
 - Been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or showing symptoms of COVID-19.
 - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7d1107dac60a6b3e3f098d/t/5e94beb12a1482195b7e2fa3/1586806449744/Employee+Screening+-+20200330+draft+final+%28002%29+SIGNED.pdf>