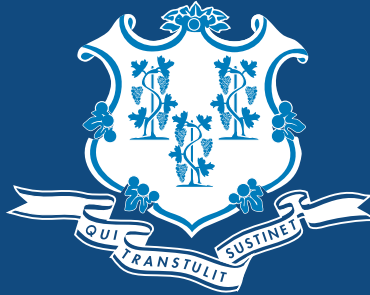


REOPEN

Connecticut[®]

SAFER. STRONGER. TOGETHER.



Governor Ned Lamont

Best Practices for Reopening

March 19, 2021

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

GOAL

Proactively protect public health and speed up the pace of economic, educational, and community recovery while restoring Connecticut's quality of life.

1

SAFETY FIRST

We will reopen society safely and securely with a proactive program that safeguards the health of our vulnerable residents, continues physical distancing, and provides clear safeguard rules for businesses and institutions deemed safe to reopen.

2

SCIENCE-DRIVEN

Our strategy will rely on a scientifically validated set of public health interventions. Patient assessment, testing, proactive tracing, field studies, and public health guidance will be deployed simultaneously to contain infection.

3

PREPARED

We will work closely with hospitals and health systems to procure and distribute critical personal protective equipment, and assess capacity of beds and ventilators to ensure optimal standard of care.

4

CHOICE

Individual businesses within sectors allowed to open are empowered to make their own choice on when they reopen. When they open, they must comply with rules we lay out to safeguard their employees and customers.

5

DYNAMIC

We include a suite of tools to inform an adaptive plan that can be nimbly scaled or rolled back rapidly based on real-time critical health metrics.

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

HOW WE WILL OPEN OUR ECONOMY SAFELY

Our plan to open the economy will address two factors:

WHAT businesses can open and when.

HOW businesses must operate **if they choose to open**.

WHAT:

- We know that some businesses put employees and customers at greater risk of transmission.
- We will prioritize opening businesses that pose a lower transmission risk and drive outsized impact on the economy.
- Transmission risk is defined as contact intensity and modification potential of businesses.
 - Contact intensity considers contact proximity, contact length, and number of contacts.
 - Modification potential considers the businesses' ability to socially distance and sanitize in accordance with regulations.
- We will assess the impact on state economic health with a focus on number of employed individuals, total GDP impacted, and impact on small businesses that make up the backbone of our economy.

HOW:

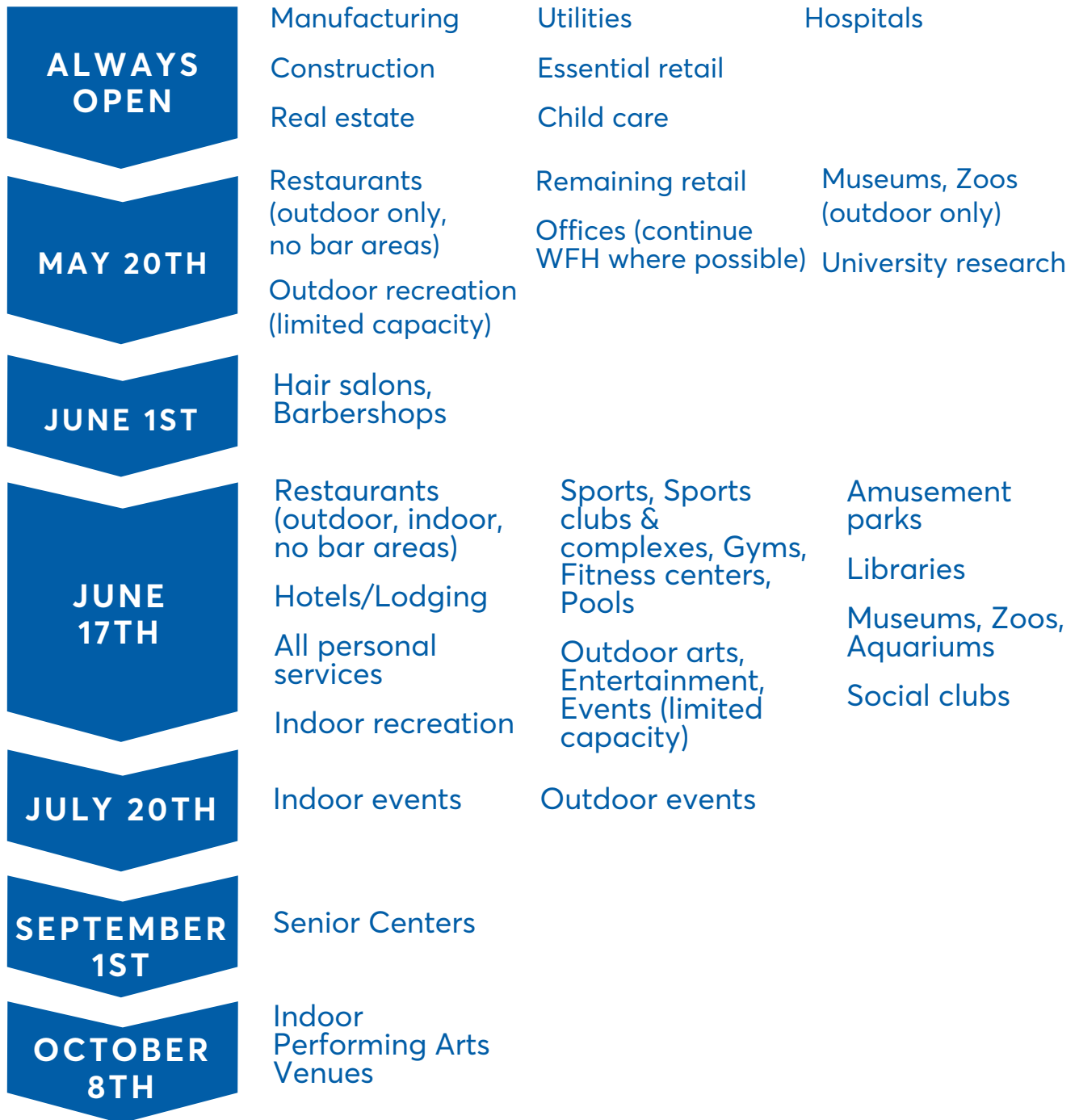
- We will provide clear operational guidance to businesses on how to reopen while ensuring the safety of both employees and customers.
- Guidance will include social distancing and hygiene, as well as the use of personal protection – for business operators, workers, and customers.
- The goal is to not only open safely, but create confidence in our society across employers, employees, and customers.
- The level of guidance will gradually become less restrictive over time, as our confidence in the ability to monitor and contain the disease increases.

BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

WHAT: SECTOR REOPENING OVER TIME

The state will open its economy with a gradual approach.

The first set of businesses started reopening when we saw a sustained 14-day decline in hospitalizations, had adequate testing capacity, had a contact tracing system in place, and had procured sufficient PPE. The timing for that reopen was **May 20th, 2020**.



BEST PRACTICES FOR REOPENING

HOW: SAFEGUARDS

As we continue to reopen businesses, we will open at our strictest controls on business operations and societal interaction. This will include, among other measures:

- Strict cleaning and disinfection protocols in all settings.
- Those who can work from home should continue to do so.
- Those in high-risk groups (comorbidities) and over the age of 65 should continue to stay safe and stay home.
- Facemasks should continue to be worn in public at all times.
- Social gatherings will be restricted in accordance to the Governor's executive order.

As we see progress on a defined set of public health metrics (detail to follow), we will gradually loosen safeguards. This will allow for the next set of businesses to open and potentially for businesses already open to operate with additional leeway. We expect this will occur over the coming months.

As always, we will make decisions based on data and science. Our plan intentionally allows for sufficient time for learning, adoption of behaviors, and ultimately the achievement of improved health metrics that create the necessary environment for new business operations. If public health metrics deteriorate, the State may choose to revert back to stricter safeguards.



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RESTAURANTS

RESTAURANTS

OVERVIEW

As Connecticut's restaurants and other food service establishments reopen, the most important consideration will be the health and safety of employees and customers. Businesses must exercise caution throughout the reopening, ensuring strict adherence to the protocols listed **on the Sector Rules for Reopening webpage**. Those businesses that are not able to meet **state requirements** shall delay opening until they are able to do so.

While these **best practices** provide a way for restaurants and food service establishments to reopen in as safe a manner as possible, risks to customers and employees cannot be fully mitigated. Customers who choose to visit restaurants during this time should be fully aware of potential risks. Individuals over the age of 65 or with other health conditions should not visit restaurants, but instead continue to stay home and stay safe.

Businesses should take these **best practices** as the minimum baseline of precautions needed to protect public health in Connecticut. Individual businesses should take additional measures as recommended by industry guidelines or by common sense applied to their particular situation.

We urge customers to stay vigilant and pay attention as to whether restaurants and other food service establishments they frequent are faithfully implementing **state requirements**.

STATE GUIDANCE FOR RESTAURANTS

These **best practices** are intended to help restaurants safely get back to work. The information here can be supplemented with guidance from other industry groups, some of which are listed below. These **best practices** may be updated as conditions evolve.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- **NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**

<https://restaurant.org/Downloads/PDFs/business/COVID19-Reopen-Guidance.pdf>

- **FDA**

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19>

- **OSHA**

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

RESTAURANTS



PLAN FOR REOPENING

Share these **best practices** with your employees and inform them of any additional specific measures being taken in response to COVID-19.



PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Appoint a program administrator who is accountable for implementing these rules. For restaurants, the administrator must be the Certified Food Protection Manager.



TRAINING

The employer **should** institute a training program and ensure employee participation in the program. Training **should** be provided at no cost to the employee and during working hours. The training materials **should** be presented in the language and at the literacy level of the employees. Employers **should** continuously update staff on changes to these Sector **best practices**. The training **should** include:

- **Best practices** outlined in this document
- Protocols on how to clean and use cleaning products (including disinfectants) safely
- Additional guidance can be found here:
https://osha.washington.edu/sites/default/files/documents/FactSheet_Cleaning_Final_UWDEOHS_0.pdf

NOTE: If any on-site duties are subcontracted, it is the employer's responsibility to ensure subcontractors are also appropriately trained.



CLEANING PLAN

Develop cleaning checklists that incorporate these rules. Ensure it is clear which employees are responsible for implementing the plans.



PERSONAL PROTECTION

Estimate required personal protection for employees and begin procuring.

RESTAURANTS



THOROUGH CLEANING

Complete a thorough cleaning of facility prior to reopening, including, but not limited to all dining, kitchen, bathroom, and seating areas, and any commonly touched surfaces.



LOG EMPLOYEES

Maintain a log of employees on-premise over time, to support contact tracing.



CERTIFICATION

Complete the self-certification on the DECD website to receive a Reopen CT badge. Once complete, businesses can choose to post the badge on-site and on social media to advertise adherence to CT rules and build customer confidence.



CAPACITY TRACKING

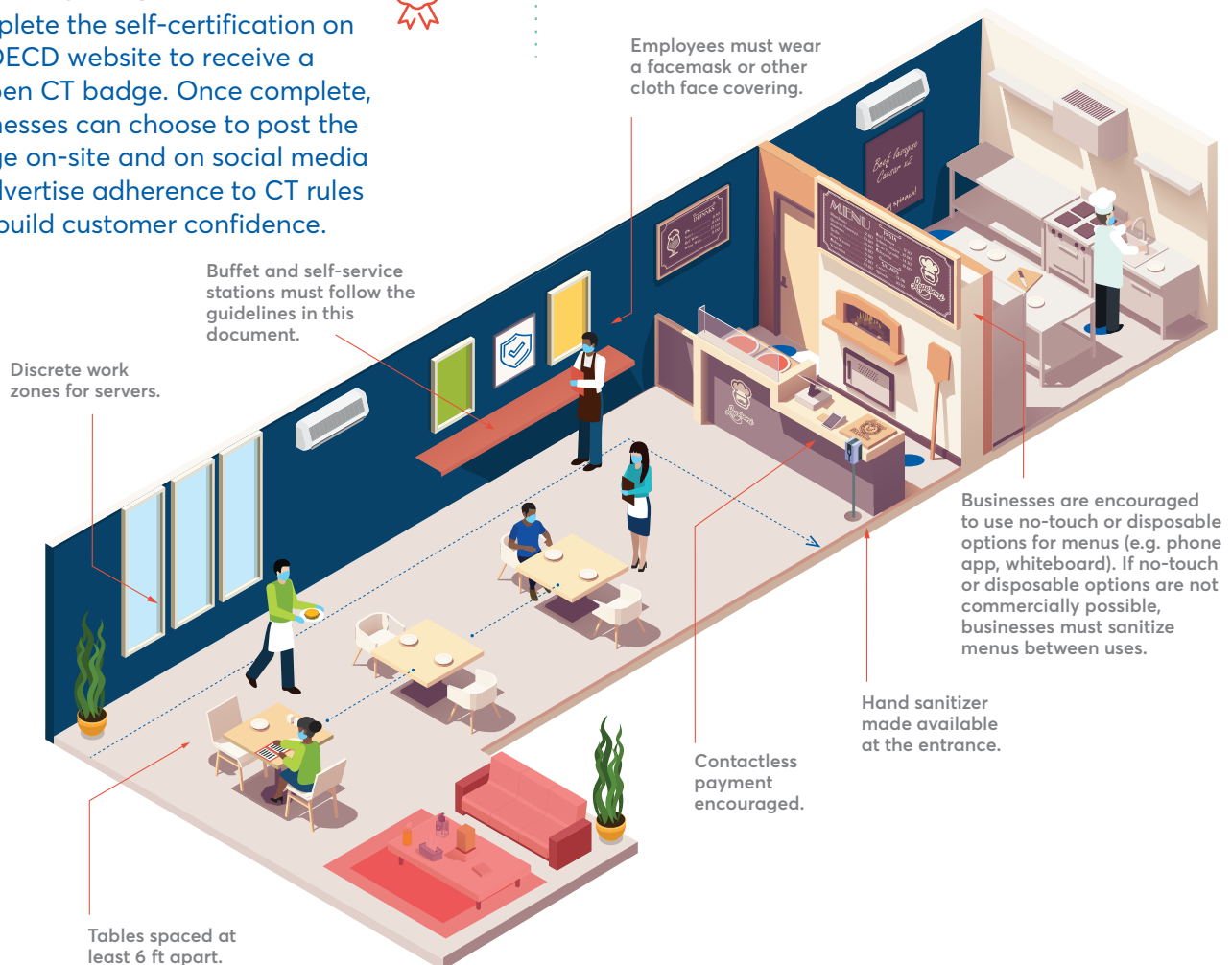
Employers are responsible for enforcing revised capacity limits.



SHIFTS

Stagger shift start/stop times and break times to minimize contact across employees.

- Consider cohorting staff within each shift (e.g. keeping the same shift schedules and avoiding mixing staff across shifts)



RESTAURANTS

ENTRY & EXIT

Consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance to allow for one-way foot traffic.

SIGNAGE

Post clear signage that supports new policies, e.g.:

- Social distancing protocols
- Cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Personal protection (face masks, gloves)
- Employees should stay home if sick/experiencing symptoms
- Customers should not enter if they are experiencing symptoms
- Additional signage can be found here:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Coronavirus-Business-Recovery/COVID-19-Signage-for-Download>



VENTILATION

For facilities with central ventilation systems, increase ventilation rates and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system where possible. For facilities where a central ventilation system is not used, window air conditioning units or unit ventilators should be adjusted to maximize fresh air intake into the system; blower fans should be set on low speed and pointed away from room occupants to the extent possible. Ceiling fans should be adjusted so that fins are rotating in a direction that draws air up toward the ceiling rather than down onto occupants. Window fans should be turned to exhaust air out of the window in the direction of the outdoors. Window fans that blow air into a room or free-standing fans that only serve to circulate existing air around a room should not be used.



WAITING AREAS

Recommended to close indoor waiting areas.



SOCIAL DISTANCING MARKERS

Install visual social distancing markers to encourage customers to remain 6 ft apart (e.g. the entrance to the restaurant, lines to be seated, lines to make payments, lines to use the restroom).



BUFFETS & SELF-SERVICE STATIONS

Self-serve beverage stations are allowed but must adhere to the guidelines below.

- Hand sanitizer **should** be made available next to beverage stations and operators **should** require customers to use before pouring beverages. Cello or paper wrapped straws and stirrers are **recommended**. Cups and lids **should** be from single pull dispenser or other method to minimize contact. Sweeteners, sugars and creamers **should** be individual packets or automated (push button or contactless) dispensers. Floor markers **should** be installed to achieve social distancing. Samplings and refills of personal mugs and cups are not **recommended**. Frequent disinfecting of the beverage station **should** take place, even during busy times.

RESTAURANTS



SEATING/TABLE ARRANGEMENT

Rearrange space to maintain at least 6 ft of empty space between customers groups. Customer groups may be seated less than 6 ft apart if non-porous barriers (e.g. Plexiglas, wood) that extend 30 inches above table height are installed between tables/booths. Restaurant owners should consult with their local Fire Marshal to ensure that any barriers constructed inside their restaurants are compliant with life safety code regulations.

NON-ESSENTIAL AMENITIES

- Amenities non-essential to a businesses' main function (e.g. pool table, dart boards, giant Jenga, etc.) are allowed but **should** be thoroughly cleaned in-between group usage. Markings on the ground shall be used to section off these amenities and ensure they are at least 6 ft away from the closest chair back/person. Only those playing shall be allowed around these areas; others must remain in their seating area. Masks must be worn at all times and no food or drink is allowed in these areas.
- Non-essential amenities that cannot be thoroughly cleaned (e.g. cards, board games, etc.) are allowed to be brought to the establishment by customers.



DISCRETE WORK ZONES FOR SERVERS

Servers should serve specific zones in the restaurant to minimize overlap, where possible.



IN THE KITCHEN

Re-arrange workstations so that food workers do not face one another and are 6 ft apart where possible (e.g. stagger workstations on either side of processing lines).



SILVERWARE

Utensils should be rolled or packaged.

TOUCHLESS APPLIANCES

Install touchless appliances wherever possible, including:

- Contactless payments, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers, trash cans



SHARED EQUIPMENT

Ensure employees do not share equipment to the extent possible (e.g. cooking equipment, trays, etc.). If shared, clean after each use.



MENUS

Businesses are strongly encouraged to use no-touch or disposable options for menus (e.g. phone app, whiteboard). If no-touch or disposable options are not utilized, businesses must sanitize menus between uses.



CONDIMENTS

Condiment containers should be provided only upon request and sanitized between uses.

RESTAURANTS



MAXIMUM PARTY SIZE

Dining groups shall not exceed 8 people.



PLATED DINING

Only serve guests once everyone has been seated.

- Food should be ordered in advance
- Guests should limit their movement while dinner is being served to allow ample room for servers to move throughout the event



PASSED HOR D'OEUVRES & DRINKS

- Allowed for events; server **should** hand hor d'oeuvres/drinks to customer; customer self-service not **recommended**



HOTLINE FOR VIOLATIONS

Post clear signage that includes the state hotline (211) for employees and customers to report potential violations of these rules.



PICK-UP, DRIVE-THROUGH, & DELIVERY

Establishments should follow the FDA guidelines for pick-up, drive-through, and delivery operations that are posted on FDA's website. Restaurants should also take the following steps to assist customers with physical distancing:

- Encourage customers to place orders online or by phone
- Offer curbside pick-up where practicable
- Demarcate 6 ft distance between pick-up or payment locations, and between the waiting line for customers waiting in line.
- Where possible, install physical, non-porous barriers (e.g. Plexiglas, plastic glass) at key points of customer interaction (e.g. pick-up areas, payment stations)



BAR SEATING

Bar seating is permitted so long as the following conditions are met:

- Staff working behind the bar follow all personal protection requirements; and
- Work behind the bar is limited to pouring/serving beverages, taking/processing orders, serving food, and delivering/picking up the bill. All mixing of drinks and other work performed behind the bar must be performed at a distance of 6 ft from customers seated at the bar or a physical barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) must be used if within the 6 ft spacing; and
 - The Plexiglas barrier must be at least 30 inches high and a gap/opening at the bottom of the barrier is allowed for food and drink service as long as the gap/opening is no more than 8 inches high.
- Parties must be seated at bars (no standing customer service), and parties must be spaced at least 6 ft from other parties or a physical barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) must be used.

RESTAURANTS



PERFORMERS/TALENT

Follow performer rules on DECD Sector Rules webpage



TENTS

- Tents with two or more sides up, comprising 50% or more of their total wall space, may operate under Sector Rules for Outdoor Dining; space heaters must adhere to appropriate local permits and/or inspections
- Fully enclosed tents or tents with over 50% of their total wall space down will be treated as indoor dining and must conform to state and local building codes
- Tents or membrane-like structures are required to have adequate ventilation of fresh air being brought in and inside air being exhausted; maximizing the amount of fresh air through intake fans, vents, windows, and openings is highly recommended; entry door and two or more window-style vents **should** be open at all times

STRUCTURES THAT LACK THE ABILITY TO VENTILATE OUTSIDE/FRESH AIR **SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED**

- Between parties: 1) Sanitization of all touchpoints and 2) Full opening and airing out of the tent/structure OR 15 minutes downtime for passive dilution ventilation
- Touchless service encouraged whereby servers do not enter structure
- Signage required to inform customer of heightened risk of enclosed spaces and that vents should remain open at all times
- Heating source allowed but will require local approval

RESTAURANTS



PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES

- All employees, including front of the house staff, are required to wear a facemask or other cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth. Employees that cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition must provide documentation to their employer.
- Employees may utilize their own cloth face covering over that provided by their employer if they choose.
- All restaurant employees shall follow FDA guidelines on usage of gloves where appropriate.



EMPLOYERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING PERSONAL PROTECTION TO THEIR EMPLOYEES

- If businesses do not have adequate personal protection, they cannot open.



PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR CUSTOMERS

- Customers are required to bring and wear facemasks or other cloth face covering that completely covers the nose and mouth.
- Businesses have the right to refuse service to an individual who is not wearing a mask.

RESTAURANTS



HAND SANITIZER

Hand sanitizer shall be made available at entrance points and common areas, where possible.



HANDWASHING

Ensure employees wash their hands routinely using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



CLEANING, DISINFECTANT PRODUCTS, &/OR DISPOSABLE DISINFECTANT WIPES

Make available near commonly used surfaces where possible (e.g. tables and chairs, bathrooms).



SHARED BATHROOMS

Clean frequently, and implement use of cleaning log for tracking. Clean multiple times a day and hourly during busy times.

- Recommend posting signage encouraging reduced capacity in bathrooms, and reminding individuals to wash their hands and wear a mask
- Consider placing a wastebasket outside of the bathroom



CLEANING & DISINFECTING

Follow federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products should be used and how.

- Use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer. Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants
- Disinfectants are irritants and sensitizers, and should be used cautiously
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants; these surfaces should be sanitized instead
- Clean and disinfect common areas, high transit areas, and frequently touched surfaces on an ongoing basis (at least daily) and more frequently if used more often. Clean and disinfect shared objects after each use (e.g. PIN pads at payment)



SEATING AREA & TABLES

Disinfect seating area, tables, and common items after each seating.



KITCHEN

Sanitize kitchen and kitchen equipment on an ongoing basis (at least daily) and more frequently if used more often.

RESTAURANTS



DAILY HEALTH CHECK

Ask employees resuming on-premise work to confirm they have not experienced COVID-19 CDC-defined symptoms and to monitor their own symptoms, including cough, shortness of breath, or any two of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue

Employees should stay home if sick.



WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

Employers may not retaliate against workers for raising concerns about COVID-19 related safety and health conditions.

- Additional information can be accessed at www.whistleblowers.gov
- Additional information for the public sector can be accessed at www.connosha.com



IN THE EVENT OF A POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

Employees should inform their employers, and follow state testing and contact tracing protocols. In addition:

- Employee should contact local public health to initiate contact tracing.
- Recommend 24-hour passive decontamination in the event of a positive case, and follow CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Additional information can be accessed at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html>



LEAVE

Employers shall adhere to federal guidance pertaining to paid leave for employees and provide this guidance to employees.

Employers shall post the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

Department of Labor poster. The poster can be accessed at:

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/posters>

- Additional guidance can be accessed at: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcr-employee-paid-leave>