



COVID-19: Food service reopening guidelines and best practices

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation's restaurants and food-related services have been impacted. Now, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are providing guidelines and best practices to reopen or continue operations.

As state and local governments implement their return-to-work plans and companies resume operations, business owners will need to take into account the ever-changing orders, recommendations, and guidance from their state and local authorities.

There is no single approach to returning to work. The following are some best practices that may help you reopen and/or continue towards normal operations while protecting your employees, your customers and your business.

CHECKLIST FOR REOPENING OR CONTINUING OPERATIONS

- Monitor local, state, and federal public health communications and ensure compliance with industry- and location-specific requirements.
- Read all related CDC and FDA guidance materials: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-re-opening-retail-food-establishments-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Develop written procedures and be prepared to educate your staff on the new procedures.
- Sanitize your entire establishment, including, but not limited to: food-contact surfaces, counters, common-use areas, such as restrooms, high-touch areas and equipment (door knobs, display cases, equipment handles, check-out counters and order kiosks). Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectants, which can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
- Check with your local health department for any updated restrictions.
- Order needed personal protective equipment (PPE), such as face masks and gloves, for your staff.
- Inventory food products to ensure expiration dates.
- If offering seating, establish a social distancing seating chart following CDC-recommended guidelines.
- Sidewalk and parking lot seating should be isolated or protected from vehicle traffic.
- Temporary street seating would be permitted only with city street closures.
- Dining/seating area barriers (fences, gates, ropes, etc.) should help to separate the dining/seating area from the pedestrian sidewalk.
- Walking surfaces, parking lot and transition to temporary seating platform should be level and free of tripping hazards.
- Ask your local health department inspector for an updated preopening inspection.
- Have labeled sanitizing bottles and solutions available.

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MEDICAL MONITORING AND EMPLOYEE EDUCATION

- Employees should be medically screened before allowing them to enter the building. This can include a COVID-19 test, antibody testing and/or daily temperature scans. Require your employees to disclose if they have had contact with a COVID-19-positive person and consider not allowing them to work without a quarantine period. It would be a best practice to conduct a daily temperature scan and document the health of the working employees. The CDC and FDA have provided guidance materials for employee screening: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-re-opening-retail-food-establishments-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- Assemble your staff and explain the new procedures. Have each employee sign a copy of the new procedures. New employees should receive the same training.

RESOURCES

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-industryregulatory-assistance-training/retail-food-protection-employee-health-and-personal-hygiene-handbook>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

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CDC Considerations for Restaurants and Bars: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>.

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