

Phase Two Guidance  
Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Restaurants

During Phase Two, the public and businesses will be required to adopt new behaviors and rigorous safeguards to reduce risk for all. This guidance is intended for food service establishments and includes hotel restaurants. If providing services, **restaurants must implement the following measures to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission amongst employees, patrons, and the community. For additional information, visit [coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo).**

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or who is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure<sup>1</sup>, must not work in or visit a restaurant due to the risk of exposing others. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell.

**Phase Two General Information for Restaurants**

- **UPDATE: Beginning May 1, 2021:**
  - **Restaurants may sell and serve alcohol to seated patrons outdoors without requiring a food purchase.**
  - **Parties of ten individuals may be seated at a table or a joined table. Indoor and outdoor fixed tables that accommodate more than 10 people may demarcate six (6) feet between groups and allow seating at those large tables.**
  - **Outdoor live music will be permitted at restaurants (without need for a waiver) but licensees must still comply with all ABRA rules relating to hours and volume, and patrons must remain seated.**
  - **Indoor live music performances remain prohibited.**
- Bars and nightclubs must remain closed.
- Restaurants may be open for patrons and allow sales, service, and consumption of alcohol, including carry-out and delivery, until midnight.
- Entertainment, such as comedy, trivia night, piano music, or even disc jockeys, conducted where patrons are seated and where they can speak at a conversational level, is permitted without need for a waiver, but the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) will enforce regulations relating to excessive sound that causes patrons to shout above the background music or entertainment.
- Indoor dining up to 25% capacity (with a maximum of 250 persons) to seated patrons only is permitted.
  - “Indoor” for dining purposes shall be defined as a space consisting of 3 or more walls and a roof.
  - Tables must be placed so that patrons are at least 6 feet apart.
  - Igloos or other structures that are designed and used for single parties (6 or less) are permitted.
- Outdoor dining, carry-out and delivery service are permitted as before.
  - “Outdoor” structures for dining purposes are defined as shade or shelter providing with no more than two walls or flaps erected. Tables must be placed so that patrons are at least 6 feet apart.
- Bar areas where a bartender is present must remain closed to patrons for seating and standing.
- Bar areas where a bartender will not be present may seat patrons with proper social distancing and table style service. Establishments with multiple bar areas must designate each bar area as either for staff use for bartending or for patron seating.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, including information about quarantine and testing exemptions, please see *Guidance for Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)

- **No standing is permitted at the bar area or anywhere else.** Patrons must be seated except when coming, going, or in transit to or from the bathrooms. Waiting lines must be outside.
- Darts, pool, billiards, ping-pong, and other activities that are not carried out at tables are prohibited.
- Reservations are required for all food service establishments that serve seated patrons. Customers must provide names and contact information and record time of arrival. **Dining records must be saved for at least 30 days and furnished to DC Health immediately upon request.**

### Requirements for Restaurants Offering Outdoor Live Music Performances

- Patrons must remain seated during performances. Performers must remain in a designated area while performing.
- Performers are required to wear a mask unless the wearing of a mask will hinder the performance, such as a vocalist or a musician that is required play their instrument through the mouth.
- The following distance must be maintained between performers and the audience:
  - A minimum of 12 feet must be maintained from the audience if performers are masked.
  - A minimum of 18 feet must be maintained from the audience if performers are unmasked.
  - Contact between performers and the audience is prohibited.
- Performers must stay at least 6 feet away from all other performers within the designated area.
  - There must be no more than 5 performers in the designated area at any one time (this number may be less to allow for appropriate social distancing).
  - Traditional choir/chorale configurations pose an unacceptably high risk of COVID-19 transmission and are not permitted at this time.
  - Contact between performers is prohibited.
- Performers who travel into DC shall follow the Travel Guidance found at [coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo).

### Employees and Patrons Must Practice Everyday Prevention Measures

- **Get your COVID-19 vaccine.** Visit [coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccinate](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccinate) for more information.
- **Stay at home if you feel unwell** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19<sup>2</sup>.
- **Practice social distancing.**
  - Stay at least 6 feet from other people when possible.
  - Patrons must **maintain 6 feet of distance** from those not in their party.
- **Employees must wear cloth face coverings** or face masks while working.
- **Patrons must wear cloth face coverings** or face masks while not eating or drinking (e.g., while ordering food and prior to being served, and after completion of meal).
  - Masks protect the wearer and protect other people.
  - Masks are most effective if they fit snugly to the face and have 2-3 layers of tightly woven fabric.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
  - Key times for patrons and employees to perform hand hygiene include:
    - Before serving food or beverages,
    - Before eating food or drinking beverages,
    - After removing used dishware, glasses, utensils, or napkins from a table (servers),
    - After using the toilet,
    - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings,
    - Before and after work shifts and work breaks,
    - Before and after services to each patron,
    - After handling another person's belongings, and
    - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, including information about quarantine and testing exemptions, please see *Guidance for Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)

- Employees must wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.

## **Employer Considerations to Encourage Employee and Patron Safety**

### **Facility Considerations**

- Signage must be posted at entrance stating that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is permitted to enter the facility and that individuals must wear a mask or face covering.
- Hand sanitizer must be made easily accessible at the entrance of every establishment.
- Facilities must provide supplies to allow for good hand hygiene. Supplies include soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol (placed on every table, if supplies allow), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans.
- Facilities must inform and remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers about social distancing, face covering and hand hygiene requirements.
- Buffets, salad bars and other communal serving areas are permitted if an employee serves the food items.
- The use of disposable paper menus is strongly encouraged. Disposable menus must be discarded after each patron use. If reusable menus are used, they must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Items from self-service areas such as drink stations, condiment stations, and utensil and napkin stations must be removed, and employees must instead provide these items directly to patrons. The use of single-use items is strongly encouraged.

### **Staff Considerations**

- Employers must provide staff with appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves) and cloth face coverings.
- Employers must stagger shifts, start times, and break times as much as possible.
- Implement leave policies that are flexible and non-punitive, and that allow sick employees to stay home. Leave policies are recommended to account for the following:
  - Employees who report COVID-19 symptoms,
  - Employees who were tested for COVID-19 due to recent exposure, travel, or symptoms and test results are pending,
  - Employees who tested positive for COVID-19,
  - Employees who are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19
  - Employees who need to stay home with their children, if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members.
- Encourage and support staff to get the COVID-19 vaccine by providing leave options for staff to get the vaccine and if they experience common side effects.
- Keep abreast of current law, which has amended both the DC Family and Medical Leave Act and the DC Sick and Safe Leave Law and created whole new categories of leave, like Declared Emergency Leave.
- Learn about and inform your employees about COVID-related leave provided through new federal law, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and all applicable District law relating to sick leave.
- Employers must educate employees about COVID-19. Refer to [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) for more information.
- **For additional information specific to restaurants**, see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html).

## **Avoid Close Contact and Reduce Touchpoints**

- If possible, have a separate entrance and exit for the establishment to allow one-way flow of patrons.

- Facilities must design and implement a process to ensure patron separation while they wait to be seated (e.g., outdoor distancing, or waiting in cars). Do not allow patrons to congregate in waiting areas or bar areas.
- Prohibit activities that require patrons to cluster.
- Employees must be spatially staggered whenever possible, to prevent congregating and to maintain 6-ft social distancing guidelines.
- Hand-shaking and other person-to-person contact between employees or with customers in the workplace must be discouraged.
- Employees must avoid using other employee's phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment (e.g., pens, pencils, check holders, etc.).

### Screening and Monitoring for Symptoms

- Employers must perform screening (e.g., symptom questionnaires) of employees daily, prior to entering the business, over the phone or in person.
  - For **Screening Tool Guidance**, visit [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
- Employees who report symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19, must not enter the business.
- Employees who become sick at work must be separated from other employees and customers and sent home immediately.
- Establishments must maintain a daily record of individuals in the restaurant for at least 30 days to assist with contact tracing. Information collected must include name, date and time of visit, phone number, and email (if available). This information must be provided immediately if requested by DC Health if a case of COVID-19 occurs at your establishment, in order to assist with contact tracing.

### Clean and Disinfect/Sanitization

- Surfaces that are frequently touched or used by employees (e.g., door handles, workstations, computers) must be cleaned and disinfected at least every four to six hours. Shared objects and surfaces (e.g., ordering and payment terminals, cash registers, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays) must be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- All table items must either be single-use and disposed of after use or cleaned and sanitized between uses/table seatings. This includes digital ordering screens, utensils, dinnerware, drinkware, tablecloths, and napkin and condiment containers (i.e., any items that may have been touched by customers).
- Restrooms must be cleaned and disinfected frequently and appropriately marked and monitored to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed. Ensure an adequate supply of soap and paper towels is present at all times.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized at least every two (2) hours. Cleaning procedures throughout the restaurant must be developed in advance of any re-opening and shared with employees so that they can be properly trained.
- Verify that dishwashing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and ensure adequate supplies of appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
- For more information about disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19, see the CDC website [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html).
- Tables and chairs must be cleaned after each seating, and check presenters must be cleaned after every use. Disinfection should be performed when appropriate (review cleaning and disinfection guidance below). Ensure that cleaning or disinfecting product residues are not left on table surfaces.
- **For comprehensive guidance on cleaning and disinfection**, please see the following DC Health Guidances at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance):
  - *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19*
  - *Guidance on Routine Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities*

### Building Considerations

- All indoor structures (permanent or temporary) must meet ventilation requirements as outlined in [Subtitle A of DCMR Food and Food Operations Section 3009](#).
- Consider making the following improvements to improve building ventilation ([cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)):
  - Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
    - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).
  - Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
  - Decrease occupancy of spaces with poor ventilation.
  - Improve central air filtration to the highest level compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
  - Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
  - Turn off any demand-controlled ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on occupancy or temperature during occupied hours.
  - Consider portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
  - Keep systems running longer hours, 24/7 if possible, to enhance air exchanges in the building space.
  - Consult with a specialist to see what works for your building.
- If the building was closed for an extended period of time, remember to check HVAC systems and ensure all water systems are safe to use. For more information, see CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings after Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html).

### Establish a Plan for COVID-19 Exposure

- Establish a plan in the event an employee or patron is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Identify a point of contact at the establishment that an employee can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information
- If an employee chooses to report to the establishment that they are positive for COVID-19, the establishment must have a notification process to share the following with staff:
  - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Referral to the *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19*, available at [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov).
  - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/testing).
- Refer to the guidance *First Steps for Non-Healthcare Employers when Employees Test Positive for COVID-19* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
  - A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes cumulatively over a 24-hour period, during that person's infectious period.
  - The infectious period starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset (or test date for people who do not have symptoms).
- Establishments must notify DC Health when:
  - An employee notifies the establishment they **tested positive for COVID-19** (not before results come back)
  - AND**
  - the employee was on the premises **during their infectious period**.
- Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website [dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements](https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements):

- Submit a **Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form**.
- An investigator from DC Health will follow up within 24 hours to all appropriately submitted notifications. Please note this time may increase as cases of COVID-19 increase in the District.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) regularly for the most current information.