

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 was recently exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, 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**

- **Effective January 22, 2021, 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.
- 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.
  - Igloos or other structures that are designed and used for single parties (6 or less) are permitted.
- Restaurants and other licensed food service establishments are permitted to start alcohol sales at 6 a.m. but **must end alcohol sales, service, and consumption at 10:00 p.m.** Carry-out and delivery of alcohol is permitted until 12:00 a.m.
- 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.
- **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.
- Tables remain limited to 6 persons, preferably from the same household.
- Reservations are required for food service establishments that sell alcohol and are encouraged for other food service establishments. Customers must provide names and contact information and record time of arrival. **Dining records must be saved for at least 30 days.**

**Employees and Patrons Must Practice Everyday Prevention Measures**

- **Stay at home if you feel unwell** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- **Practice social distancing.** Stay at least 6 feet from other people when possible.
- **Employees must wear cloth face coverings** or face masks while working.
- **Patrons must wear face coverings** while not eating or drinking (e.g., while ordering food and prior to being served, and after completion of meal), and **maintain 6 feet of distance** from those not in their party.
  - Masks protect the wearer and protect other people
- Employees must wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- 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.

## **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 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.
- 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.

### **Clean and Disinfect/Sanitation**

- 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).
- Tables and chairs must be cleaned and disinfected after each seating, and check presenters must be cleaned and disinfected after every use. Ensure that cleaning or disinfecting product residues are not left on table surfaces.
- 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://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html).

### **Building Considerations**

- 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://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://coronavirus.dc.gov).
  - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available [coronavirus.dc.gov/testing](https://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://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 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.