



Restaurants and Food Committee Additional Recommendations for the ReOpen DC Advisory Group

May 21, 2020

For more information, and to see the ReOpen DC Advisory Group Steering Committee's full recommendations, please visit <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>.

RESTAURANTS AND FOOD RETAILERS COMMITTEE

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Throughout this process, the Committee proactively sought a wide array of viewpoints and perspectives. This started with the review of guidance provided by a variety of national organizations and public health experts, and a close look at how jurisdictions throughout the region and country are handling similar issues. At the local level, in addition to the industry stakeholders who are part of the Committee, we tapped a broader group of restaurant owners, operators, and workers to help develop some of the guidelines with a focus on economic and equity considerations. Our Committee also consulted with advocates and reviewed letters from multiple advocacy organizations and community leaders, which are included in the report’s appendix. The Committee was also utilized the Reopen DC survey, which yielded more than 130 comments specific to the topics within our purview, a survey conducted by the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington that included feedback from 150 area restaurants, and a survey conducted by the DC Bar and Restaurant Workers Alliance. In order to gain insight and perspective from the Council, the Committee held a conference call with Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie.

STAGING RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the report’s primary guidance and universal safeguards (e.g., physical distancing of at least six feet, use of masks in public spaces, stringent sanitation and hygiene practices) the Committee proposes the following guidance for the subsectors listed below.

SUBSECTOR	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Outdoor table service only, with physical distancing and safeguards – Buffets prohibited – Maximum table size of 6 – Standing or seating at outdoor bars prohibited – Request that customers provide names and contact information and record time of arrival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indoor seating of up to 50% capacity allowed with safeguards and physical distancing – Outdoor seating permitted – Bar seating permitted with individuals 6 feet apart (bar standing still prohibited) – Request that customers provide names and contact information and record time of arrival – Maximum table size of 10; parties larger than 6 must be from same household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Indoor seating of up to 50% capacity allowed with safeguards – Restaurants may submit case-by-case requests for capacity expansion for approval consistent with physical distancing requirements – Request that customers provide names and contact information and record time of arrival – Outdoor seating permitted

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Buffets permitted if employee serves the food – Bringing alcohol from home prohibited 	
Grocery stores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued operation under physical distance guidelines – Curbside pickup and delivery highly encouraged – Buffets and salad bars prohibited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued operation under physical distance and capacity guidelines – Buffets permitted if staff serves the food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued operation under physical distance and capacity guidelines
Farmers markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expanded vendor offerings at markets, including (1) non-food items, (2) food items prepared on site, (3) allowing customers to select their own produce, as in grocery stores, (4) provide produce in non-pre-bagged quantities, and (5) provide non-essential information and education (like nutrition) – Extension of existing farmers market waivers through the rest of the season – Market operators to maintain designated entrances and exits from the market, capacity limits, and queues to enter the market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintain spacing between vendors of at least 6 feet – Market operators may relax physical distancing requirements to the appropriate requirements and recommendations of DC Health at the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued operation with restricted capacity and safeguards
Food trucks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage customers to pre-order to minimize lines and gathering; ensure physical distancing 	Continuation of Stage 1 safeguards and guidance	Continuation of Stage 1 safeguards and guidance

RECOMMENDED SAFEGUARDS

The Committee also recommends adoption of the sub-sector specific universal safeguards outlined below.

SUBSECTOR	STAKEHOLDER	ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED MITIGATION GUIDELINES
All restaurants and food establishments	Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use of single-use utensils or condiments at restaurants, or sanitation of common items in between all table seating – All food-contact surfaces must be sanitized every 2 hours – All food-handling staff to wear masks and gloves – Use online reservation and ordering systems whenever possible and keep customer logs to facilitate contact tracing

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS AND ‘BIG IDEAS’

The Committee and its members have identified several additional initiatives and ideas for consideration, which include:

- Continued **permission for restaurants to provide take-out and delivery of alcoholic beverages** throughout all phases of reopening
- **Relaxed criteria for outdoor operations**, enabling establishments to incorporate and/or expand outdoor seating areas while ensuring physical distancing
- **Flexibility for food service establishments to change the type of license they hold** within the food service category
- Authorization of food service businesses to **conduct some or all operations at secondary locations**
- **Implementation of ‘click and collect’ for SNAP authorized food retailers** and grocers to facilitate curbside grocery pickup
- **Pursuing federal FEMA funding to support restaurants** providing meals to vulnerable residents
- **Creation of a tax incentive for restaurants to donate food** to frontline and vulnerable residents
- **Expansion of SNAP, WIC and free school meal programs** to assist vulnerable residents
- Prioritization of the development of **grocery stores and urban farming in food deserts and Wards** with limited access to fresh food
- **Expand transportation programs for low-income residents** like the Taxi to Rail and Lyft Grocery pilot program to facilitate access to food in low-grocery-density neighborhoods
- **Expand urban farming in the District to meet needs of vulnerable populations** through investment in infrastructure including cold storage and greenhouses, and identification of District properties for the Urban Land Lease Program
- **Display of ‘safety pledge’ signage** in restaurant windows, facilitating mutual acknowledgement of restaurant safety and customer participation in safety guidelines while at the establishment. Sample pledge would read as follows:

- Our promise to you (restaurants to customers):
 - Our establishment is committed to following and adhering to all health and operating measures outlined by Mayor Bowser, DC Health, and recommended guidance from the FDA and ServSafe.
 - We will continue to lead in safe sanitation practices.
 - We will monitor the health of all staff.
 - We will maintain strict physical distancing guidelines for all seating.
 - We will make hand sanitizer or hand washing stations available at all entrances.
 - We will clean and sanitize common areas and all surfaces regularly.
 - We will clean and sanitize all tables and chairs after every use.
 - We will sanitize place settings, utensils, menus, and condiments after every use, or we will use single use materials.
- Your promise to us (customers to restaurants):
 - You will keep everyone safe by staying home if you have recently been exposed to COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19 (including a fever, aches, cough, shortness of breath, headache, chills, or loss of taste/smell), or are sick in any way.
 - You will limit your party size to six or fewer guests. If more than six guests, you must pledge that they are all be from the same household.
 - You will practice physical distancing in all waiting areas and while seated.
 - You will utilize hand sanitizer or a hand washing station upon entry.
 - You will consider contactless delivery options if you have underlying health conditions or are otherwise concerned about contracting COVID-19.