

STL Regional Business Recovery Initiative

RESTAURANT OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Over the past several weeks we have collaborated with public health officials and leading restaurateurs in the St. Louis region to prepare for the re-opening of in-restaurant dining in our community in a safe and responsible fashion. We have sought input from more than two dozen chefs/operators who understand the complexities associated with running a restaurant operation in our present environment including representatives from Niche Food Group, Bailey's Restaurants, Hamilton Restaurant Group, Vicia/Winslow's Table, Sugarfire/High Point, Sidney Street Café and Nudo House.

The recommendations contained herein do not supersede Public Health orders, laws or regulations that apply to your business and jurisdiction.

The goal of the protocols outlined in the document is to minimize contact reducing the risk of virus spread among both staff and guests. The core set of principles that together prevent the spread of infections by respiratory transmission (including COVID-19) include:

- 1) **Practice social distancing** – maintain 6 feet between and among employees and guests at all times
- 2) **Monitor employee health** – check the status of your employee's health and screen employees for COVID-19
- 3) **Use protective equipment** – a fabric face cover must always be worn by employees and guests
- 4) **Clean/sanitize/disinfect** – wash and sanitize hands, and wipe down frequently touched surfaces with EPA-approved disinfectant (Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.)

A) Restaurant Responsibilities to Staff

- ✓ Provide all staff members with proper protective equipment including fabric or disposable facial covering for all, and gloves (with instructions for proper use to avoid cross contamination). Kitchen and service staff to wear face coverings at all times.
- ✓ Task appropriate EPA-registered chemical disinfectant cleaning supplies should be provided as necessary to all staff members.
- ✓ Use EPA-registered disinfectants for all routine cleaning. For a list of products that meet the EPA's criteria for use against the novel coronavirus, visit <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.

- ✓ Make disinfectant wipes available to front-of-house staff and instruct them to wipe down countertops, tables, chairs, pens and other shared surfaces.
- ✓ Give additional training to all cleaning staff. Staff should know how to:
 - Put on and remove disposable gloves safely
 - Use disinfectants according to manufacturer directions
 - Disinfect all high-touch surfaces, including door handles, toilet and faucet handles, light switches, remote controls, ice and vending machines, and elevator buttons
 - Recognize and report the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- ✓ Provide training to all staff in social distancing requirements, proper hygiene, the proper use of protective equipment, and guest interaction protocols to ensure everyone's safety.
- ✓ Restaurants should create a safe environment for staff to work in that includes distancing of work areas, distancing from guest interactions, and additional signage throughout back of house spaces as reminders for safe practices.

B) Staff Arrival and Departure

- ✓ Upon arrival at work, employees must be masked, and employers must conduct health checks (e.g., temperature and symptom screening) of employees at the start of each shift. Conduct health checks safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Confidentiality should be respected. Employers may use examples of screening methods in CDC's General Business FAQs as a guide.
 - Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, muscle aches, sore throat and new loss of taste or smell.
 - Screening should include 1) a temperature check if it can be performed with a touchless thermometer, 2) asking about the presence of new or worsened cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, fever, chills, muscle aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell and 3) asking if the employee has had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - Employees with a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or above, or who answer yes to any of the screening questions must not be allowed to enter the workplace. Employees who develop any symptoms of respiratory illness while at work must immediately be sent home. Employees with symptoms should contact their healthcare provider for additional guidance.

- Employees who are sent home with symptoms should not return to work until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation or they have been cleared to return by their healthcare provider.
- ✓ If an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, work with local health agencies to ensure all employees and customers who can be identified as having had close contact while the employee was infectious are contacted. While awaiting formal investigation, compile a list of employees, customers, or other people known to be in close contact with the person diagnosed with COVID-19. Employees identified as having close contact should be immediately sent home or told not to come into work until the investigation has been conducted.
- ✓ Close off areas recently used by an employee or customer who has tested positive for COVID-19 and do not reuse them until after cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- ✓ Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms.
- ✓ Staff should always wash hands when arriving at and before leaving the worksite using warm water (at least 100°F) and soap for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing should be repeated after any of the following activities: using restrooms, sneezing, touching the face, blowing the nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, eating or drinking. When hand washing is not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol may also be used.
- ✓ Keep all personal items, including cell phones and laptops, in the designated areas to prevent contamination of workspaces. Personal items such as outerwear should be stored in a locker or other designated area. The restaurant should consider providing each employee with a clear plastic bag for their items.
- ✓ Reusable bottles/cups must stay in the personal items area, single use cups are suggested.
- ✓ Dispose of gloves and hairnet in designated trashcans before leaving the worksite.
- ✓ Post signs around worksites to remind staff and guests of health and safety procedures including use of face coverings, social distancing and hand washing.
- ✓ Train all staff to recognize the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

C) Restaurant Preparation

- ✓ Banquet rooms and bar areas that primarily serve alcohol and do not serve full meals should remain closed in St. Louis County. These establishments may open in St. Louis City as long as all the protocols contained herein are met.
- ✓ Post both interior and exterior signs reminding customers not to enter the restaurant if they have symptoms, to obey social distance requirement, use face coverings and maintain proper hygiene.
- ✓ Prop open frequently used interior doors to avoid /minimize contact. Where possible, doors should open hands-free by using automatic and foot-actuated openers. All door handles and high-touch areas should be disinfected at least twice daily by wiping down with a clear cloth and diluted bleach or certified EPA cleaner.
- ✓ Diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- ✓ Set up hand-washing/sanitizing stations at all entrances/exits/high-traffic areas.
- ✓ Designate trashcans specifically for staff protective equipment - always keep lid securely sealed. Empty protective equipment trash cans frequently - always wearing gloves that are then disposed of after removal.
- ✓ As best they can, staff should always maintain a distance of 6 feet from others in both the kitchen and dining room. Exterior and interior seating should be adjusted to accommodate 6 feet of separation between dining parties unless there is a partition that physically separates the parties.
- ✓ In restaurants with booth seating, installing plexiglass or other solid material partitions to separate parties, as an alternative to 6' between booths, is permitted as long as the divider is at least 60" high from the floor.
- ✓ Limit group size of tables, ideally to 6 persons, but no more than 10, preferably members of the same household. Dining parties arriving together

may be seated at a table or booth where their separation from each other may be less than 6 feet.

- ✓ Food prep stations in the kitchen must be set up at least 6 feet apart.
- ✓ Kitchen staff should practice 'no-contact' transfers: place items down on a counter for the next person to pick up, rather than passing back and forth.
- ✓ Outdoor dining is recommended as it likely poses less risk for virus transmission than dining in interior spaces. St. Louis City and County officials will assist you in obtaining the necessary permits to introduce or expand your outside dining space. The City of St. Louis Food and Beverage Control Program can be reached at (314) 657-1539. The St. Louis County Food Safety Program can be reached at (314) 615-8900. Separation regulations apply equally to interior and exterior dining.
- ✓ Consider a reservation-only business model or call-ahead seating. Offer call ahead ordering to limit the time customer is in the restaurant and around others.
- ✓ Mark every 6 feet in distribution lines with chalk, tape, cement decals, etc. It is recommended that guests wait in their car for their table to become available with one member of the party remaining in line, or the restaurant having a text notification system.
- ✓ It is recommended restaurants offering dining service maintain a log of customers to assist public health officials with contact tracing if necessary. Your POS system may provide this function or use of a hand registry to write and record the name, date and phone number of each party.
- ✓ Single use menus should be used and disposed of once used by each individual customer. An alternative is posting your menu online in a mobile-friendly fashion inviting guests to browse on their smart phone. If a laminated menu must be used, wipe them down with an EPA-certified sanitizer after each use.
- ✓ All condiments including salt and pepper shakers, ketchup and mustard should be removed from all tables. These items should only be handled by service and kitchen staff. If single serve packets are provided, they should not be re-used for subsequent customers. Any remaining packets should be discarded between customers. Holders and dispensers for single use packets should not be used.
- ✓ Discontinue self-serve food and drink options, such as buffets, salad bars and drink stations.

- ✓ Gaming areas, including darts, pool, video games, etc. should remain closed at this time.

D) Cleaning and Sanitizing

- ✓ Limit the number of employees in shared spaces, including kitchens, break rooms, and offices to maintain at least 6 feet of separation between people.
- ✓ Kitchen staff must wear and change gloves frequently throughout every step of preparation. Change gloves between handling food and touching kitchen equipment, doors, handles, etc. Wash hands between glove changes.
- ✓ Wash hands frequently. Hand washing with soap and water should continue to remain a top priority. Wash hands every 30 minutes or anytime you leave your cooking station or come in contact with any other high touch areas such as refrigerator/freezer doors.
- ✓ After hand washing, employees need to dry hands off and turn off the faucet with a paper towel. Special note: do not use clean hands to turn off the faucet or use cloth linens or towels to dry hands.
- ✓ Kitchen surfaces, especially hand sinks, handles, prep stations, and door knobs need to be wiped down with disinfectant or EPA approved sanitizer at least every hour. A log should be created to document all practices with a two-person verification checklist. Kitchen staff must utilize fabric or disposable masks while preparing food. For information on EPA-approved disinfectants, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
- ✓ Store to-go containers in protective plastic covers. Employees when handling to-go containers should always wear gloves. Limit the number of employees handling containers to as few of staff as possible.
- ✓ China, glass and silverware may be used for in-restaurant dining as long as FDA-approved washing, rinsing and sanitizing standards are met. Diligent care should be taken to ensure sanitizer concentration and water temperature requirements are strictly followed. Dish washing machine sanitizing mechanisms should be closely monitored and chemical concentration/temperature tested using the appropriate test kit or temperature measuring device every 4 hours minimally. Hands should be washed after handling soiled dishes and before handling clean dishes.
- ✓ Use EPA-approved sanitizer throughout the restaurant. Visit EPA.gov to find the current list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19.
- ✓ Dedicate a team member to disinfect the area occupied by customers upon departure including tables, chair backs, menus and pens. Decorative

centerpieces and table tents should not be used unless disposable and single use. Gloves should be worn by staff and disposed of after cleaning each table. Consider the use of disposable menus, dishware and napkins.

- ✓ Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected regularly using EPA-recommended disinfectants, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, doorknobs, and light switches. Make sure restrooms are regularly stocked with supplies for handwashing, including liquid or foam soap and disposable paper towels for drying hands. Providing hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol is a supplement to hand washing, but not a replacement. Restroom waste receptacles should be emptied regularly.

E) Protective Equipment

- ✓ All restaurant kitchen staff must wear the following protective equipment while on site:
 - Disposable food-grade gloves
 - Hairnet, hat, or other hair restraints
 - Face covering (fabric or disposable masks)
- ✓ Please review these recommendations concerning the proper use of protective equipment prepared by the World Central Kitchen: <https://wck.org/covid19-safety>.
- ✓ Staff should change their face covering if it becomes soiled, torn or wet.
- ✓ Wash/sanitize hands after changing masks and before putting on a new pair of gloves.
- ✓ Change gloves when switching tasks, handling different foods, or after touching objects that should be considered contaminated (cell phone, computer, clothes, door handles, etc.)
- ✓ If the integrity of a glove is compromised (e.g. ripped, punctured) change gloves immediately - wash hands per proper protocols
- ✓ Face coverings must always be worn by service staff unless working alone in an enclosed space that is not involved with food preparation.
- ✓ It is recommended that all guests be required to wear a face covering while entering and leaving the restaurant, and only remove them while at their tables.
- ✓ Cups, lids, napkins and straws should be handed directly to customers by staff as opposed to self-service.
- ✓ No self-serve drink, food service or buffet options unless food or drink is pre-packaged.

- ✓ Do not place utensils on table until patrons are seated.
- ✓ Service staff are not required to wear gloves, but must wash their hands frequently and between serving tables for at least 20 seconds. If a wash station is not immediately available, they must also rub their hands thoroughly with hand sanitizer containing 70% alcohol.

F) Payment and Delivery Procedures

- ✓ Limit physical contact with others as much as possible.
- ✓ To reduce contact, a central pay station is recommended for in-restaurant dining maintaining 6 feet of distance between staff and guests. If a line forms, 6 feet of separation should be maintained with chalk marks or decals on the floor. Another option is using a portable payment system that can be administered at each table by the server making a contact free transaction.
- ✓ Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions at cash registers, bars, host stands, and other areas where maintaining physical distance of 6 feet is difficult.
- ✓ Cash transactions and cash tips are not recommended. If cash is transferred, the server should wash their hands after accepting.
- ✓ Invite guests to use their own pens when signing credit card authorizations. If not available, wipe the provided pen down with sanitary wipe after each use. Consider eliminating the guest signature requirement.
- ✓ Hand sanitizer should be placed conveniently at the payment station and be used by service staff and guests at the start and conclusion of each transaction.
- ✓ For curbside or delivery orders, pre-payment with a credit card over the phone or online, including gratuity provides a contactless transaction.
- ✓ Encourage high-risk individuals to order take-out or delivery options and/or offer them special hours where there are even fewer people in the restaurant.
- ✓ Practice contactless transfers by placing items down on a counter for the customer to pick up. In the case of curbside delivery, ask the guest to open their trunk and place the order in.
- ✓ Delivery vehicles must be disinfected before and after each delivery by wiping door handles, steering wheel, control panel, gear shift, seat belts, etc.

- ✓ Gloves must always be worn and changed between deliveries. Practice 'no-contact' transfers.
- ✓ If delivering to a distribution site, avoid going inside the building(s). Have receiving contact meet outside and practice no-contact transfers.