

## COVID-19 Guidelines for Re-Opening your Restaurant, Bar or and other Food Service Premises

This guide provides you with the information you need to re-open your restaurant or other food premises. Part 1 provides advice on preparing your restaurant for food service, and Part 2 helps you to modify your premises and practices to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please call Toronto Public Health (TPH) at 416-338-7600, email [DineSafe@toronto.ca](mailto:DineSafe@toronto.ca) or visit [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19).

**Restaurants, bars, and other food or drink establishments may open if they comply with the following conditions:**

### Part 1: Food Premises Pre-Opening Checklist

The following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening your establishment for business:

- ✓ Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- ✓ Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- ✓ Ensure hand washing stations are adequate and functional.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles and equipment knobs.
- ✓ Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- ✓ Clean, sanitize and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.
- ✓ Where applicable, ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
- ✓ Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
- ✓ Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
- ✓ Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
- ✓ Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes.
- ✓ Consider training staff on new procedures/requirements.

### Part 2: Guidance for the Re-Opening of Food Premises

This guide describes the requirements of TPH for the re-opening and operation of retail food premises within the city of Toronto.

#### COVID-19 Transmission

[COVID-19](#) is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk.

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It is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus may survive on plastic and metal surfaces for several hours.

### **Main measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in food premises**

- [Physical distancing](#) by keeping a two metre/six foot distance from both staff and customers.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of all potentially contaminated surfaces.

### **Additional protective measures to keep everyone safe**

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash hands often. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a [face mask or covering](#) when in an enclosed, public setting.

### **Maintain logs for customer and staff contact information**

- Operators of dining - in food service establishments are encouraged to keep logs of the name and contact information from one person in each party and staff, with date, check in and check out times.
- If there is a case of COVID-19 who was contagious while at the restaurant, public health will use that list to notify the staff and customers.

**The owners/operators of food premises must ensure that the above requirements are met.** The guidance below describes how these requirements might be implemented, but operators are ultimately responsible for providing an environment that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Operators should also refer to guidance from the [Ministry of Labour](#). This Ministry guidance supplements, but does not replace, guidance from TPH about food safety, or the Ontario Food Premises Regulations.

There is no requirement for restaurants to be inspected by TPH before reopening. However, if you have a new restaurant, you must contact TPH before opening to arrange for an inspection.

## **Before Re-Opening**

### **Prepare the physical space**

- The establishment must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:
  - a distance of at least two metres, or
  - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier
- Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark as unavailable to ensure physical distancing
- Consider reservations only.

- Remove waiting area seating, and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
- Demarcate floor with markers for any areas where a line up may occur.
- Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
- Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff must wear masks.
- If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
- If necessary, install barriers (e.g. plexiglass) to protect staff (e.g. host desk) or customers (e.g. between back-to-back booths).
- Remove buffet-style meal service, self-serve locations, and self-serve drink dispensing machines.
- Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Provide direction to customers:
  - Install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
  - Erect signage for physical distancing, [passive screening](#),<sup>1</sup> and any policies affecting them.
- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).

### Develop Protocols

- Policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned between uses.
- Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitise between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc.
- Staffing: for example, stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences.
  - Note that [active screening](#)<sup>2</sup> and not allowing staff to work if showing symptoms of COVID-19 are required policies. Staff must report any symptoms developed during shift to their supervisor.
  - Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Signage: post [signs](#) on handwashing, physical distancing, reporting symptoms, and make them visible to staff and customers.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment.

<sup>1</sup> Passive screening: Customers screen themselves by following steps described on a poster

<sup>2</sup> Active Screening: Staff are screened by someone prompting them with questions

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- Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, door handles, switches, table tops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
- Shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
- Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps etc.
- Specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning materials.
- Thoroughly clean the premises before opening.
- More details on cleaning and disinfection are available at Public Health Ontario's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.
- Supply dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to staff and customers, including at the door.
- Minimise unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves. Minimise the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers).
- Establish a COVID-19 screening protocol to be applied to each employee before they start a shift that consists of at least a screening questionnaire in a form provided by Toronto Public Health. The screening protocol shall be produced on request to any person authorized to enforce this chapter.

### **Train Staff**

- Train staff on how best to serve food, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary handling (e.g. serve to front of table and let customers distribute, avoid handling coffee cups when refilling, let customer fill/pack leftovers in containers).
- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Practice physical distancing during breaks.
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to gloves and masks as needed.
  - Train staff in proper use of gloves and masks. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the correct technique, and to avoid touching the face.
- Keep a staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.

### **During Active Operation**

- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- Screening of staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and

colleagues. Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift. The questions can be completed on paper, online or by asking staff directly.

- Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) and/or contact their primary health provider and get tested.
- Ensure that the number of customers permitted to be inside the establishment at any one time is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres/six feet from every other person in the venue, and indoor events must not exceed 100 people (subject to any exemptions as determined by the Medical Officer of Health or their designate).
- Ensure that no more than 10 people are seated at each table in an indoor or outdoor area.
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting; have them wait outdoors when necessary, but ensure that they do not impinge on the space of diners on the patio.
- Customers who exhibit [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display [posters](#) telling customers if they have symptoms they cannot enter.
- Ensure customers are seated at all times in indoor or outdoor areas of the premises where food or drink is served or consumed except when a customer is entering or exiting the area, travelling to and from the premises' washroom, or paying.
- Make sure that tables are cleaned and sanitized at least daily and between sittings.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation.
- Dancing, singing or performing music is prohibited at the establishment except:
  - A person or group under contract with the establishment may dance, sing or perform music
  - Members of the public may sing or perform music at the establishment if:
    - they are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument;
    - they maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while singing or performing music; and
    - any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music is cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- It is advised to keep the volume of music, either live or recorded, at a reasonable level - one that does not cause customers to raise their voices or shout, thereby possibly increasing the risk of transmitting the virus.

Record the date, time, name and contact information for each reservation, which can be used by public health in the event contact tracing is required.
- Maintain a customer log that:
  - a) records "customer information", in a legible manner, consisting of the name and contact information of at least one person from each party that attends an indoor or outdoor area of the premises where food or drink is served or consumed. The record shall include the date the person attended, the party's check in and check out times, and the party's table number or, if

there is no table number, the location on the premises where the party was seated and was served or consumed food or drink;

- b) is stored securely for 30 days and then destroyed; and
- c) is produced on request of the Medical Officer of Health or their designate for the purpose of COVID-19 contact tracing or other public health purposes, in accordance with the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

- Post a sign, in a form and at one or more locations satisfactory to the Medical Officer of Health or their designate, notifying the public about the collection of the "customer information."

## Patios

Restaurants are encouraged to provide patios wherever feasible. Patios provide conditions which inhibit the survival and spread of the COVID-19 virus. The rules for physical distancing, service, and cleaning and sanitation that apply to the indoor area of the food premises also apply to patios. Patios must also comply with all City of Toronto requirements, available online at [toronto.ca/cafeTO](https://toronto.ca/cafeTO).

Requirements for patio dining are as follows:

- The establishment must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:
  - a distance of at least two metres/six feet, or
  - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Groups must be seated two metres/six feet from another group.
- Ensure that a distance of two metres/six feet is maintained between customers or groups that are together. Co-mingling should be avoided.
- Limit the time servers spend within two metres/six feet of customers.
- Allow space for the safe circulation of customers and staff.
- Consider a reservation system to avoid lines of waiting customers.
- Ensure that lines of waiting customers do not come close to patio customers.
- Demarcate floor with markers for any areas where a line-up may occur.
- Mark direction of travel to designate entrances and exits, pick up areas and washrooms.
- Post signage promoting physical distancing upon entry.
- Provide one or more means of exiting the premises.

## Download and Print Posters for your Restaurant

[Physical distancing](#)

[Protect yourself](#)

[Cover your cough](#)

[How to safely put on and take off a mask](#)

[Posters and staff screening questionnaires](#)

**Additional Resources**

[Province of Ontario Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)

**More information**

For more information, visit our website at [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19), email [DineSafe@toronto.ca](mailto:DineSafe@toronto.ca), or call us at 416-338-7600.