



Restaurants

This tip sheet is intended for employers, workers and patrons of restaurants as an overview of potential hazards in the workplace due to COVID-19 and related control measures.

In all cases, guidance from local public health authorities must be followed and general COVID-19 prevention practices should be implemented, as outlined in:

www.ccohs.ca/pdfs/covid-general.pdf

Consider the Risks

Dining at a restaurant may involve close contact with people from other households and frequently touched surfaces or objects. COVID-19 transmission during these activities depends on the types of settings (e.g., indoors, outdoors, small, large, well or poorly ventilated), the number and characteristics of participants (e.g., age, maturity, physical ability, comprehension or knowledge of new rules), proximity, durations and types of interactions between participants, as well as the health safety measures put in place by employers and facility managers.

Each venue may have unique layouts and amenities. Assess the risk for each activity and interaction separately. Employers should consider the following:

- How to protect patrons and employees? Conduct risk assessments of job tasks and implement solutions to make the workplace safer.
- What type of setting is it? Indoor settings can accumulate viruses in the air when crowded or poorly ventilated. Outdoor settings are generally safer than indoors due to natural dilution ventilation but can be impractical in winter months.
- How many people will employees interact with and how close are the physical interactions? The risk of transmission increases with close and frequent contact. Installing plexiglass in key locations can lower the risk.
- How long are the interactions? Evidence indicates that the person-to-person spread is more likely with prolonged contact, train employees to keep interactions short.
- Do employees and patrons frequently have contact with high touch surfaces or objects? If so, remove the object from service or modify them to be contactless. Otherwise, increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of those surfaces/objects.
- How many diners are permitted in the restaurant at one time? Follow the current public health restrictions of your local jurisdiction for total number of patrons allowed, distancing requirements, and maximum party size.
- Are face masks required for patrons and employees in your jurisdiction, if so when and where are masks required (e.g., required until eating at the table)? Check local public health restrictions, enforce them in your restaurant.
- Do you have background or live music playing? Turn down the volume of the music to keep patrons and employees from raising their voice to talk. Check local public health restrictions for live acts, they may not be allowed due to forceful breathing when singing.
- Are you anticipating or observing crowds outside your restaurant? Consider accepting reservations only and promote curbside pickup with physical distancing markings on the pavement.

General Guidance

- Restaurant management should keep up to date and comply with orders from their local public health authorities or regulators.
- Clearly communicate to patrons all new practices and policies that will affect their experience (e.g., mask requirements for themselves/staff, requirements for reservations etc.). Post these changes at entrances, on websites, social media and in newsletters.
- Consider implementing capacity limits or requirements for reservations, so employees can manage the flow of customers and everyone can maintain at least 2 metre physical distance at all times.
- Increase ventilation and fresh air return for the kitchen, dining room and bars (e.g., adjust HVAC system for maximum air exchanges, open windows and doors, weather permitting).



Restaurants

- Reduce noise levels as much as possible (e.g. turn off/down background music) so people can speak as quietly as possible.
- Suspend live music and performances.
- Use signs and floor markings (at least 2 metres apart) to direct customers, indicating where to stand while in line, desired flow of people, and to designate entrances and exits.
- Install clear plastic barriers (e.g., plexiglass) to separate cash registers from patrons and other employees, where appropriate.
- Promote home delivery, pre-ordering, and curbside pick up.
- Minimize unnecessary visitors to the restaurant. Conduct meetings virtually and reschedule non-critical maintenance and service calls, if possible.
- Remind employees to clean and disinfect personal devices such as cellphones at the start of each shift.
- Discourage the sharing of personal cellphones by employees while at work.
- Post maximum occupancy notices where people may congregate, such as washrooms, waiting areas, pick up windows, and counters.
- Consider placing certain sinks, urinals, toilets, and hand dryers out of service to promote physical distancing in washrooms.
- Provide hand sanitizer dispensers (with minimum 60% alcohol content) in high traffic areas such as entrances, exits, check outs and service counters.

Screening and Response Plan

- Implement a sickness policy for patrons and employees.
- Implement a COVID-19 response plan. Follow it when an employee or patron reports symptoms while in the restaurant. The plan should include, at minimum:
 - Have the symptomatic person immediately wear a medical mask (if not available, they should wear a non-medical mask/face covering).
 - Immediately isolate the symptomatic person from others in a designated area or room.
 - Clean and disinfect all surfaces/objects that the symptomatic person may have come into contact with.
 - Instruct symptomatic person to self-isolate at home as soon as possible, seek medical care if necessary, and follow instructions from the local public health authority.
 - Instruct the symptomatic person to avoid using public transit, if possible.
 - If a patron or employee informs you of a positive COVID-19 test result, report it to your local public health authority and cooperate with any contact tracing efforts.

Human Resources

- Train all staff about COVID-19, including:
 - COVID-19 symptoms
 - How to prevent the spread of COVID-19
 - COVID-19 response plan
 - How to protect themselves
 - To stay informed (using reputable sources)
 - Good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene
- Wear non-medical masks for all tasks and interactions that cannot maintain 2 metre distance, or as required by local public health authority.

Restaurants

- Minimize close physical contact between staff:
 - Stagger start, end and break times to limit the number of employees at entrances and break rooms.
 - Conduct team meetings, training sessions and orientations in small physically distanced groups, preferably outdoors or in large well-ventilated rooms.
 - Discourage after-work gatherings at the restaurant.
- Consider having cohorts of employees that work the same shifts, and keep cohorts separate as much as possible.
- Reduce the number of employees in the restaurant at a time, where possible.
- Train employees to wash hands or sanitize after touching shared items (e.g., checklists, clipboards, menus, pens, tablets, trays, carts, payment machines).
- Create electronic versions of reports and forms, if possible.
- Modify shared storage areas (e.g., winter footwear, sweaters, coats). Have employees store their personal items in separate lockers or in labeled, sealed bins/bags.
- Require employees wear freshly cleaned uniforms or clothes for each shift. Clothes should be bagged and washed after each shift.
- Communicate corporate information electronically, instead of verbally.

Payments

- Encourage contactless payment methods. Clean payment pin pads and touch screens between uses.
- Consider designating one employee and one register to handle all cash transactions. That employee should be trained to wash or sanitize (with minimum 60% alcohol content) hands frequently and never touch their face with unwashed hands. Disinfect this equipment multiple times a shift.
- All employees that handle cash should wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitize after every transaction.

Contact Tracing

- Collect the contact information of all diners and workers in the restaurant. Accurate and complete information will be required by local health authorities to conduct effective contact tracing.
- Depending on the jurisdiction, providing information could be voluntary. Obtain an individual's consent prior to collecting their information and make sure they understand their rights.
- For groups that enter together, the contact information is only required from one person, provided that they are able to contact all group members.
- To comply with local privacy laws. The personal information collected can only be used for contact tracing purposes and must be destroyed as required by authorities.
- This information should be kept private and secure.

Dining Areas

- Follow local public health authorities' orders for group size requirements.
- Arrange tables and chairs to maintain at least a 2 metre distance between each dining party.
- Consider one-way traffic flow and widening aisles within the dining space to help maintain physical distancing.
- Physically separate adjoining booths and similar seating arrangements:
 - Add physical barriers between them such as clear acrylic plastic or plexiglass.
 - Maintain empty booths between occupied booths.

Restaurants

- Remove high touch items from the dining room (e.g., condiments, menus, promotions), wherever possible.
- Replace traditional menus with, easy to disinfect, laminated menus or replace them with one-time use paper sheets. Alternatively, create online menus that are easily accessible by smart phone (e.g., QR codes).
- Consider creating or expanding outdoor dining areas, weather permitting. Consult public health authorities and government websites for information and recommendations.

Curbside Pickup and Takeout Windows

- Limit the number of patrons allowed in food pick up areas, and provide an overflow waiting area outside, if possible.
- Configure order pick-up areas in such a way to maintain 2 metre distance between customers and employees. Use floor markings for clarity.
- Install clear barriers between employees and customers at order counters or windows.
- Modify payment pads to have long handles to help employees and customers maintain greater separation.
- Prominently post signs with pick up instructions.

Food Preparation and Service

- Continue to follow all food safety requirements.
- Temporarily suspend self-serve options that require using shared utensils such as salad bars, breakfast bars, or buffets.
- Modify kitchen workstations to ensure at least 2 metre distance between employees.
- Servers should always strive to maintain at least 2 metres distance from patrons, except for short interactions such as food delivery or taking payments.
- Have cutlery, condiments, napkins and other items available upon request instead of in communal dispensers.

Events/Gatherings

- Follow local public health authorities' orders regarding indoor gathering and events. Do not exceed the maximum allowable number of participants.
- Segregate gathering and event participants from other patrons of the restaurant.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Follow general cleaning guidance found here: <https://www.ccohs.ca/images/products/pandemiccovid19/pdf/cleaning-disinfecting.pdf>

- Restaurants operators should focus on trays, waste and recycling bins, countertops, touch screens, cash drawers and boxes, bill trays, payment pin pads and frequently used office equipment (pens, tools, phones, radios, keyboard, mouse, etc.). If in use in your workplace include high touch devices such as digital tablets, self-serve beverage stations and order kiosks.
- High transmission risk objects and surfaces should be disinfected multiple times a day.
- Ensure washrooms are cleaned frequently, have running water, and are stocked with soap, paper towels and a plastic lined no-touch waste container.
- Clean and disinfect tables, chairs, eating surfaces after each customer use.
- Make sure that the dishwashing equipment is operating within specifications, chose sanitizing cycles or setpoints, and use appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
- Avoid cross-contamination between clean and dirty dishware/glassware.

Home Delivery Services

Restaurants

- Wear a non-medical mask when interacting with customers.
- Wash or disinfect your hands before and after each delivery or after refueling your vehicle.
- Maintain at least 2 metre distance from people and customers (i.e., use the video doorbell or intercom where possible, text messages or phone calls, place the delivery on the ground, stay back from customers).
- Minimize cash handling by requesting or encouraging cashless transactions (credit/debit card, e-transfer). If cash must be exchanged, consider using a container to deposit cash and minimize contact.
- Routinely clean and disinfect coolers and insulated bags used for deliveries.

Provide mental health support to all workers, including access to an employee assistance program (EAP) if available.



For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada

<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs.

Disclaimer: As public and occupational health and safety information is changing rapidly, local public health authorities should be consulted for specific, regional guidance. This information is not intended to replace medical advice or legislated health and safety obligations. Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of the information, CCOHS does not guarantee, warrant, represent or undertake that the information provided is correct, accurate or current. CCOHS is not liable for any loss, claim, or demand arising directly or indirectly from any use or reliance upon the information.