**Food service and Covid-19**

**FDA:[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**Back of house**

**Managing employee health:**

* Employees should report symptoms to supervisors and stay home, using the [CDC’s guide](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html) to taking the appropriate steps when sick with Covid-19.
* Clean and disinfect areas where the infected employee has been. Co-workers who have been within six feet of the infected worker should be considered exposed and:
  + Undergo testing before work.
  + Monitor for possible symptoms during work and take frequent temperature checks.
  + Wear masks.
  + Stay at least six feet away from others.
* **Resources**:
  + [Implementing safety practices for workers who may have been exposed to Covid-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html)
  + [Managing returning employees who were sick](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html)

**Personal Hygiene:**

* Frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds, especially before and after food preparation and after eating, using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing or blowing one’s nose; use soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitizer.
* Avoid touching your face.
* Use gloves to avoid barehanded contact with food.
* **Resource**:
  + [FDA employee health and personal hygiene handbook](https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-industryregulatory-assistance-training/retail-food-protection-employee-health-and-personal-hygiene-handbook)

**Implications regarding food safety:**

* Clean, separate, cook and chill
  + Avoid cross-contaminating prepared foods with raw foods.
  + Cooked foods must reach proper internal temperatures.
  + Cooling is done rapidly, ideally within four hours (see HACCP guidelines) so that time spent in the danger zone – between 40F and 135F – is minimized.
* Sanitize floors, equipment, surfaces and other frequently touched areas using [EPA-registered disinfectants](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19) during periods between meals.
* Ensure employees are properly trained, particularly those being cross trained to assume new duties, and that they perform based on established procedures.
* [Click here](https://www.fda.gov/media/137867/download) for the FDA food safety checklist for reopening during Covid-19.

**Front of house**

**Implications regarding customer health**:

* Discontinue salad bars, buffets, fountain drink and condiment stations and other communal setups for diners in which there is ample human contact. Limit use of these amenities with additional monitoring as restrictions ease and the dining department chooses to resume these services.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* Require six feet of spacing between guests as they wait for service.
* No pets, except for service animals

**Implications regarding delivery and takeout**:

* Establish designated pickup zones and require residents to maintain six feet of distance and wear masks.
* Staff should provide contactless service by wearing gloves and leaving prepared meals in a designated area for residents to receive.
* Keep meals at appropriate temperatures by using proper transport carts:
  + Maintain cold temperatures using gel packs.
  + For hot foods, ensure insulated cases are properly functioning.
  + Routinely clean and sanitize equipment.

**National Restaurant Association/ServSafe**:[[3]](#footnote-3)

* [Click here](https://go.restaurant.org/rs/078-ZLA-461/images/National-Restaurant-Association-COVID19-Reopening-Guidance-Update.pdf) for the NRA guide to Covid-19 reopening; among the service-related disciplines:
  + **Social distancing**: Communicate using signage, floor markings for one-way traffic (with ADA accessibility) and audio messages; avoid displays that may result in customer gatherings such as self-serve buffets and salad bars, and implement sneeze guards and other appropriate barriers if these amenities are offered, while frequently sanitizing and changing out utensils. Install sneeze barriers and other partitions at the host station, the register and other areas where maintaining six feet of separation is difficult. Set up designated pick-up areas inside or outside the dining establishment. Update floor plans to where tables are at least six feet apart and limit party sizes to no more than the maximum recommended by the CDC or local governments. Consider a reservations-only model. Waitstaff should wear masks, especially if they come into contact with guests. Set up touchless hand sanitizing stations for employees and guests.
  + **Pickup and delivery**: Ensure delivery containers for transport, such as coolers, are cleaned and sanitized; maintain time and temperature controls and avoid cross-contamination by wrapping food during transport. Allow residents to order online.

**Facility design**:

* Increase ventilation rates and air changes; consider temporary bypass of energy recovery systems.
* Maximize daylight through windows and glazed facades. Provide protective awnings for queues forming outside.
* Replace light switches with motion-sensor controls or phone-based app controls.
* Separate entry and exit doors should be provided for safety and efficiency. Consider adding touchless entry capability.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Add touch-free restroom fixtures such as soap/sanitizing dispensers and air dryers. Replace flush valves and faucets with hands-free devices. Restrict access to restroom fixtures to provide a minimum of six feet of spacing between fixtures.
* Retrofit dining room layout to increase spacing between tables and limit the number of seats to allow for adequate spacing apart of people, and measurement taken a minimum of six feet.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* **See also**: [US Foods Reopening Blueprint](https://www.usfoods.com/content/dam/usf/pdf/general/20200505_USFoods_Reopening_Blueprint_FinalV7.pdf)

1. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-updelivery-services-during-covid-19#operations> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-re-opening-retail-food-establishments-during-covid-19-pandemic> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://restaurant.org/covid19> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/BuildingTypeReport-Retail.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://content.aia.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/STN20_%20344901_ReOccupancyAssessmentTool-V02_sm_v09.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)