



# Arizona Restaurant Association

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## Restaurant Guidance on Reopening Dining Room Operations

### **“Welcome Back to the Table”**

The Arizona restaurant industry has an outstanding safety track record and continues to meet the high standards under the FDA Food Code. The COVID-19 crisis has stressed not just our businesses and employees, but also the future of the industry. As we continue to welcome our guests back into our dining rooms, it is important to understand the new actions we can take as an industry to protect our staff, customers, and communities.

### **Introduction**

Welcome Back to the Table is a set of guiding principles and operating protocols designed by industry to enable Arizona restaurants to reopen their dining rooms in a safe and responsible manner. The Arizona Restaurant Association worked with industry leaders, public health experts, restaurant operators of all sizes, and our supplier partners to develop these guidelines to ensure customers that the restaurant industry is taking a leadership role in protecting our community.

### **Requirements for Restaurants pursuant to Executive Order 2020-40**

#### **Containing the Spread of COVID-19**

*NOTE: the provisions of the Governor’s requirements are not repeated verbatim and have been adapted by the ARA to correct for typos and intent.*

Pursuant to [EO 2020-40](#) and the [Governor’s Requirements for Restaurants and Bars Providing Dine-in Services](#).

In addition to the previous guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS), under all circumstances, the following precautions are now required for restaurants and bars providing dine-in services in Arizona::

- Enforce physical distancing of at least 6 feet between customers.
  - Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet between tables, including limiting

- parties to no more than 10.
  - Clearly mark tables and chairs that are not in use.
  - Maintain clearly marked 6-foot spacing along entrances, waiting areas, hallways, patios, and restrooms and any other location within a restaurant where queues may form, or patrons may congregate.
  - For bar top and counter seating, each party must be spaced at least 6-feet apart.
- Continue to provide options for delivery, pick-up, or curbside service even if a location offers dine-in.
- Cloth masks and frequent handwashing are required for all servers, host staff and employees that interact with customers.
  - Develop and enforce standards for the use of cloth masks by employees.  
***NOTE:** The ARA recommends restaurants adopt the [CDC guidance of cloth mask usage](#) and discourage employees from continuously removing and redonning their masks.*
  - Develop and enforce a handwashing policy for servers as it exists in the Food Code.
- Post physical and/or electronic signage at the restaurant entrance of public health advisories prohibiting individuals who are symptomatic from entering the premises.  
***NOTE:** At the time of publication the Arizona Department of Health Services has not published any advisory for restaurants to post. The ARA recommends restaurants check with their County Health Departments to see if they have developed any language to use. In the meantime, the ARA has published a [standard posting for your use](#).*
- Support healthy hygiene practices for both employees and customers:
  - Enforce [hand washing](#), [covering coughs and sneezes](#).
  - Ensure you have soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, and tissues on hand.
  - Ensure hand sanitizer is available at or adjacent to entrances to the facility, restrooms and in employee work areas – If hand sanitizer is not available ensure you have soap and warm running water readily accessible to staff and customers at marked locations.
  - Post signs on how to [stop the spread of COVID-19](#), [properly wash hands](#), [promote everyday protective](#) measures and [properly wear a face covering](#).
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation practices.
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment after use.
  - Implement comprehensive sanitation protocols, including increased sanitation schedules for bathrooms.
- Restaurants should sanitize customer areas after each sitting with EPA-registered disinfectant, including but not limited to:
  - Tables

- Tablecloths
- Chairs and/or booth seats
- Table-top condiments and condiment holders
- Any other surface or item a customer is likely to have touched
- Implement symptom screening for employees prior to the start of their shift.
  - Perform wellness/symptom checks, including temperature checks for all restaurant personnel.
- Eliminate instances where customers serve their own food, including salad bars and buffets.
- Avoid using or sharing items such as menus, condiments, and any other food.
  - Instead, use disposable or digital menus, single serving condiments, and no-tough trash cans and doors.
  - Wipe any pens, touchpads, counters, or hard surfaces between each use by a customer.
- Consider assigning duties to vulnerable workers that minimize their contact with customers and other employees.
- Train all employees in the above safety actions.

### **ARA Recommendations**

Restaurants should review this guidance document and all the resources listed on the resource page to determine what additional regulations, requirements or best practices apply.

### **Preparing to Reopen**

Restaurants should consider the following steps when preparing to safely reopen their dining rooms:

- Review and understand the new rules issued by the Governor's Office
- Rehire and retrain staff to ensure:
  - All employees have current food handling training
  - All employees are training on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
  - All employees understand your health screening protocols
- All food items that are out of date should be discarded
- Work with your suppliers to ensure enough cleaning and sanitation chemicals, and other supplies will be available to safely reopen
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the facility – especially dining areas and other spaces that have been closed
- Consider modifying your layout and/or using signage and other equipment to comply

- with social distancing requirements
- Ensure an adequate supply of hot water as required by the food code
- Flush water lines at all faucets
- Clean out ice machines
- Clean/Sanitize all food contact surfaces
- Ensure you have all supplies for hand washing and sanitizing in both the food establishment and restrooms
  - Soap
  - Paper towels
  - Sanitizer and appropriate testing strips
  - Toilet paper
  - Hand sanitizer (for customers and if available)
- All equipment is operational (cold holding, hot holding, cooking, etc.)
  - Cold holding equipment is holding less than 41-degrees Fahrenheit
  - Hot holding equipment is providing a constant heat source greater than 135-degrees Fahrenheit
- Non-latex gloves are available and should not be reused or used for multiple tasks

### *Restarting your Draught Beer System*

- If Beer was left in lines and beer system maintenance was continued on a 14-day cycle:
  - Turn gas source/sources on (this may include CO2 and nitrogen if system uses a blender)
  - Reconnect keg couplers to kegs and engage (ensure both connection point on the keg and the keg coupler are clean and free of bacteria)
  - If Foam on Beer detectors (FOB's) are present in the system, refill via normal process
  - Pour beer until clear beer is flowing from faucet.
- If lines were clean and liquid was blown out of lines
  - Turn on gas source/sources (this may include CO2 and nitrogen if system uses a blender)
  - Adjust power pack to 29 degrees (normal operating temperature is 28-33 degrees)
  - Reconnect keg couplers to kegs and engage (ensure both connection point on the keg and the keg coupler are clean and free of bacteria)
  - If FOB's are present in the system, refill via normal process
  - Pour beer until clear beer is flowing from faucet.
- If the system was not shut down properly and has not been cleaned for an extended period of time, a deep clean process may be necessary to remove excessive bacteria

growth – consult with your beer line manufacture and/or distributor to find the best deep clean process for your system

## **Rehiring Staff**

Bringing staff back will be critical to any restaurants successful reopening. When making an offer to return to work, restaurants should do so in writing and outline the new policies and procedures put in place to create a safe work environment. Employers should also include basic information in the offer letter such as job location, rate of pay, job duties, and schedule, even if this information has not changed since the employee was furloughed.

Keeping records of your communications with employees is critical when rehiring. Any acceptance or denial of a job offer should be recorded in writing. For those restaurants that have applied for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) this information will be essential in your loan forgiveness calculation (see below).

“As an exercise of the Administrator’s and the Secretary’s authority under Section 1106(d)(6) of the CARES Act to prescribe regulation granting de minimis exemptions from the Act’s limits on loan forgiveness, the SBA and Treasury intend to issue an interim final rule excluding laid-off employees whom the borrower offered to rehire (for the same salary/wages and the same number of hours) from the CARES Act’s loan forgiveness reduction calculation. The interim final rule will specify that, to qualify for this exemption, the borrower must have made a good faith, written offer of rehire, and the employee’s rejection of that offer must be documented by the borrower. Employees and employers should be aware that employees who reject offers of re-employment may forfeit eligibility for continued unemployment compensation.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Restaurant Reopening Responsibilities and options**

### **Social Distancing**

Restaurants should maintain a least 6-feet between groups of patrons and limit group sizes to no more than 10. As an alternative, restaurant may install barriers between booths or tables that are within 6-feet of each other. Waiting areas should be kept clear of large groups and 6-feet of separation should be maintained between groups. Restaurants are encouraged to use technology solutions that can notify guests when their tables are ready so that guests can wait in other locations (such as their cars). This will ensure that families or groups of friends are distanced from other groups while maximizing usable space.

- Limit tables to groups of 10 to comply with CDC guidance on group size<sup>2</sup>
- Tables with guests should be at least 6-feet apart in all directions, or protective barriers

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<sup>1</sup> (Paycheck Protection Program Loans Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), 2020)

<sup>2</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

should be placed between tables or booths.

- In waiting areas, a 6-foot distance should be maintained between parties, indoor and outdoor
- Technology solutions should be utilized to decrease the number of patrons waiting in or near the establishment

## Employees

Restaurants should institute an employee health screening protocol in accordance with [CDC Guidance on screening employees for signs of COVID-19](#)<sup>3</sup>. This may include temperature checks of employees once their body temperature has adapted to the inside temperature of the restaurant. If an employee's temperature is equal to or greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or they are exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, or shortness of breath), the employee should be sent home and instructed to follow [CDC guidance for individuals that are sick](#). Any employee showing symptoms of COVID-19 should not return to work until they have met the [CDC standards to end isolation](#).

Restaurants should adopt changes to their practices to ensure staff remain at least 6-feet apart. However, because of the unique environment of restaurants, maintaining a strict 6-foot separation of staff members may not be possible, especially in the kitchen area. Restaurants should adopt a policy requiring staff to wear masks during their shift.<sup>4</sup> If using cloth masks, the masks should be laundered after each use and used [in accordance with CDC guidance](#).

Restaurants should continue to follow the FDA Food code on glove usage.<sup>5</sup> The usage of gloves is only beneficial when a strict set of standards are followed in high risk activities. The idea of restaurant waitstaff wearing gloves might make a few people feel safer, but this can actually create a more dangerous environment for the spread of COVID-19. [A 2004 study](#) found that 50% of the time, those who were wearing gloves failed to notice punctures or tears in their gloves.<sup>6</sup> [A CDC study](#) reported that workers are far less likely to wash their hands when wearing gloves.<sup>7</sup> Proper glove use would require discarding gloves every time an object is touched, washing your hands, and donning a new pair of gloves. As an alternative, restaurants should adopt an enhanced handwashing schedule for front of the house employees and/or designate specific employees as food runner to lower contact points.

- Implement an employee health screening protocol that includes a temperature check after the employee has had time to acclimate to the building's temperature (ensure employees stay separated during this acclimation period) – As an alternative, restaurant

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<sup>3</sup> (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

<sup>5</sup> (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2017)

<sup>6</sup> (Michaels, 2004)

<sup>7</sup> (Green, et al., 2007)

may use technology solutions to perform a wellness check on employee prior to their arrival at the facility. *See resources page*

- Require staff to wear cloth masks and ensure the masks are laundered after each use
- Implement an enhanced hand washing schedule for front of the house staff, and continue to follow the high standards of the food code for back of the house hand hygiene

## Sanitation

Because the virus can survive on surfaces for a long period of time, restaurants will need to increase their sanitation schedules for commonly touched surfaces. Additionally, restaurants should consider alternatives to traditional reusable menus. Many options exist that can be used to decrease menu touch points including technology solutions (viewing the menu on a customer's phone), menu boards placed throughout the restaurants, single-use menus that are discarded after use, and an easily cleanable (such as fully laminated) menu that is cleaned and sanitized after each use.

Other touchpoints, such as tabletops and seats should be sanitized after each use. Normal tabletop condiments should be removed from tables and kept in a centralized location, only brought out at a customer's request, and sanitized after each use. All sanitation protocols should use an [EPA-registered disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogens claim](#).<sup>8</sup>

- Restaurants should consider alternatives to traditional reusable menus, such as single-use menus, technology solutions, menu boards, or menus that are easily sanitized after each use with EPA-registered disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogens claim
- Restaurants should sanitize customer areas after each sitting with EPA-registered disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogens claim, including but not limited to:
  - Tables
  - Tablecloths
  - Chairs/booth seats
  - Any other surface or item a customer is likely to have touched
- Increase cleaning and sanitization schedules for commonly touched hard and porous surfaces (see Appendix A)
- Perform increased training with staff and reinforce cleaning and disinfection protocols

## Bars and Bar Area

Bars and bar areas of restaurants should ensure they have adapted their operations to comply with State rules on activities. Bars and bar areas should designate an area of the bar as a "prep-area" and disallow customers to be seated within 6-feet of that area. Additionally, bar seating

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<sup>8</sup> (Environmental Protection Agency, 2020)

should be set up to ensure groups are at least 6-feet apart from each other. Congregating in the bar or bar area should be limited to designed seating and standing areas to encourage social distancing.

- Designate an area of the bar for preparing all food and drink items and ensure that no customer is within 6-feet of the designated area
- Separate bar seating to ensure that groups are at least 6-feet apart from each other in all directions
- Designate seating and standing areas in the bar or bar area and limit congregating to those areas



## **Additional Resources**

[ARA Stop the Spread Poster](#)

### **National Restaurant Association**

- [ServSafe COVID-19 Training and Resources](#)
- [NRA Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Handwashing 101 Poster](#) (English and Spanish) and [Youtube Video](#)
- [Handwashing Infographic](#) (English and Spanish)
- [Before You Come to Work Poster](#)
- [Cleaning vs. Sanitizing Poster \(English & Spanish\)](#)

### **ECOLAB**

- [Operational Readiness Checklist](#)
- [Resuming Operations PPT](#)
- [Foodservice Opening Checklist](#)
- [COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Public Spaces, Hospitality, Foodservice, and Long-term Care Facilities](#)

### **Wellness Checks**

ARA as partnered with WeeCare to provide ARA members access to their [Fever Free App](#) at a discounted price. The Fever Free app enables employers to receive wellness check information, including verified temperature checks, from their employees remotely.

### **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- [Business and Workplace Resources](#)
- [What's New](#)
- [Latest News](#)
- [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [Restaurant and Bar Guidance](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Situation Summary](#)
- [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](#)
- [Hand Washing Posters](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself and Others \(Poster\)](#)
- [Coronavirus Symptoms](#)

- [Cloth Mask Guidance & Poster](#)
- [Stop the Spread \(Poster\)](#)

## **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

- [Guidance on Returning to Work](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants & Beverage Vendors Offering Takeout or Curbside Pickup](#)
- [Worker Exposure Risk to COVID-19](#)
- [Retail Workers and Employers in Critical and High Customer-Volume Environments](#)
- [Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus \(Poster\)](#)
- [Guidance of Recording Cases of COVID-19](#)
- [Cloth Masks FAQs](#)

## **Equal Employment Opportunity Commission**

- [Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
- [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)

## **Small Business Administration**

- [Paycheck Protection Program FAQs](#)
- [SBA COVID-19 Funding Options](#)

## References

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- U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2017). *Food Code* . College Park, MD.

## **Appendix A**

### **List of High Touchpoints**

- **Back of House**
  - Door handles and push plates
  - Handles of all equipment doors and operating push buttons
  - Handles of dispensers (beverage, etc.)
  - Walk-in and other refrigerator handles
  - Walk-in refrigerator and freezer plastic curtains
  - Freezer handles
  - 3-compartment sink and mop sink handles
  - Handwash sink handles
  - Soap dispenser push plates at handwash sink
  - Cleaner dispenser push buttons
  - Towel dispenser handle at handwash sink
  - Trash receptable touch points
  - Cleaning tools
  - Buckets
  - Telephone keypad and handset
  - Computers
  - Office handles and safe handle
  - Microphone and point of sale register
  - Breakroom tables and chairs
  - Display screens on equipment
  - Ice scoops
  - All service area counter surfaces
  - All kitchen/fresh department counter surfaces
  - Hand and cold food storage
  - Steam tables
- **Dining Area & Front of House**
  - Door handles, push plates, thresholds and hand railings
  - Chairs, booths, bar stools, and tables
  - Trash receptable touch points
  - Any counter
  - Hostess desk
  - Drink and condiment dispensers
  - Display cases
  - Self-service areas

- Point of sale registers/touchscreens
- Trays
- Menus
- Kiosks
- Other public areas
  - Door handles, push plates, thresholds and hand railings
  - Elevator buttons
  - Chairs and tables
- Restrooms
  - Door handles
  - Sink faucets and toilet handles
  - Towel dispenser handle
  - Soap dispenser push plates
  - Baby changing station
  - Trash receptable touchpoints
- Carpet & Upholstered Furniture
  - Remove visible contamination (if present) and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces, then
  - If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry the items completely.
  - If the items cannot be laundered, use products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus and that are suitable for porous surfaces  
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.