



NEW YORK STATE

Reopening New York

Food Services Guidelines for Employers and Employees

These guidelines apply to all restaurants and food services establishments, including food trucks and other food concessions. In [regions](#) that are in Phase 1, or have not yet reached Phase 2, such establishments may only operate by take-out and delivery. In regions that have reached Phase 2, such establishments may open outdoor spaces with seating for customers, in accordance with “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Outdoor and Take-Out/Delivery Food Services.” In regions that have reached Phase 3, such establishments may open indoor spaces with seating for customers, in accordance with the guidelines below/in “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Food Services.” Please see the aforementioned guidance for the definition of “outdoor space.”

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all operators of food service sites should stay up to date with any changes to state and federal requirements related to such establishments and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Limit indoor capacity to no more than 50% of maximum occupancy, exclusive of employees. ✔ Limit outdoor capacity to the number of tables that can be safely and appropriately arranged, such that each table is a minimum of 6 ft. away from another. ✔ All indoor and outdoor tables with seating for customers must be separated by a minimum of 6 ft. in all directions. Wherever distancing is not feasible between tables, physical barriers must be enacted between such tables. Barriers must be at least 5 ft. in height and not block emergency and/or fire exits. ✔ Regardless of physical distance, employees must wear an acceptable face covering at all times. ✔ Patrons must wear face coverings at all times, except while seated; provided that the patron is over the age of 2 and able to medically tolerate such covering. ✔ Individuals seated at the same table must be members of the same party (but may be from different households), with a maximum of 10 people per table. Seating in bar areas and communal tables are only permitted if at least 6 ft. can be maintained between parties. ✔ Clearly signal 6 ft. spacing in any lines for customers waiting to order, pick-up food, be seated, or use the restroom, as well as in any pick-up or payment location. ✔ Designate entrances/exits for customers and separate entrances/exits for employees, where possible. ✔ Limit in-person employee gatherings (e.g. staff meetings) to the greatest extent possible. ✔ Establish designated areas for vendor pickups and/or deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Ensure a distance of at least 6 ft. is maintained among workers at all times, unless the core activity requires a shorter distance. (e.g. cooking, cleaning, clearing tables). ✔ Prohibit the use of small spaces (e.g. freezers, storage rooms) by more than one individual at time. ✔ Modify the use and/or restrict the number of work stations/employee seating areas to maintain 6 ft. distance in all directions. ✔ Designate discrete work zones for services, where possible. Servers should serve specific zones in the restaurant to minimize overlap. ✔ Ensure kitchen staff are dedicated to one station throughout their entire shift. (e.g. salad or grill or desserts), to the extent possible. ✔ Encourage kitchen staff to place items on the counter for the next person to pick up, rather than passing items from hands to hands. ✔ Reduce bi-directional foot traffic by using tape or signs with arrows in narrow aisles, hallways, or spaces. ✔ Encourage customers to wait in their car or outside until food is ready to be picked up/they're ready to be seated. ✔ Encourage customers to place orders online or by phone. ✔ Allow for contactless order, payment, delivery, and pick-up, where possible. ✔ Allow customers that will be seated to order food prior to arrival, and encourage customer reservations for seating. ✔ Ensure a one-at-a-time process for vendors, in which one vendor delivers a product at a time, employees clean and disinfect high touch surfaces, and the next vendor can come on the premises.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide workers with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the employee and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of need for replacement. ✓ Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, and face shields. ✓ Ensure all staff wear face coverings at all times and that they practice hand hygiene and use bare hand barriers consistent with state and local sanitary codes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If employees wear gloves during non-food preparation activities, ensure they replace gloves frequently, and encourage them to change gloves when switching tasks (e.g. serving customers to pre-rolling silverware). • If employees do not wear gloves, ensure they frequently wash their hands with soap/water. ✓ Clean, replace, and prohibit sharing of face coverings. Consult the CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as instructions on use and cleaning. ✓ Train employees on how to don, doff, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE . ✓ Limit the sharing of objects (e.g. kitchen tools, pens, pads), as well as the touching of shared surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, keypads, touch screens); or, require workers to wear gloves when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or, require workers to perform hand hygiene before and after contact. ✓ Ensure that employees who are bussing tables wash their hands with soap/water and, if they wear gloves, replace the gloves before and after cleaning and disinfecting tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Require customers to wear face coverings when not seated at a table (e.g. when waiting for pickup, placing order at counter/window, walking to/from table, walking to/from restroom). ✓ Encourage, but don't require, customers to wear face coverings when seated at a table and not eating and/or drinking. ✓ In food trucks and concessions where there are not running water stations, employees should wear gloves or regularly use hand sanitizer and continue to comply with federal, state, and local food handling and hygiene requirements.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain logs that document date, time, and scope of cleaning. ✓ Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not available or practical. ✓ Provide and encourage employees to use cleaning and disinfection supplies for shared surfaces for use before and after use of these surfaces, followed by hand hygiene. ✓ Regularly clean and disinfect the establishment and more frequently clean and disinfect high risk areas used by many individuals and for frequently touched surfaces (e.g. restrooms). Cleaning and disinfection must be rigorous and ongoing and should occur at least after each shift, daily, or more frequently if needed. ✓ Ensure that equipment is regularly cleaned and disinfected using registered disinfectants, including at least as often as employees change workstations. Refer Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19. ✓ Before returning to work, complete pre-return checks and assessments of kitchen systems to ensure a healthy and safe environment. ✓ Minimize sharing of kitchen equipment between staff (e.g. knives, pots, rags/towels), where possible. ✓ Do not provide customers with devices (e.g. buzzers) to provide alerts to customers that seating or an order is available, unless such devices are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between each use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discourage food preparation employees from changing/entering each other’s work stations during shifts, unless they are appropriately cleaned/disinfected. ✓ Provide guests with a single-use, paper, disposable menus and/or display menus on white boards/chalk boards/televisions/projectors. ✓ Encourage customers to view menus online (e.g. on their own smartphone or electronic device), where possible. ✓ Make hand sanitizer available throughout high-tough areas (e.g. outside restrooms), and place it in convenient locations, such as at entrances, exits, and cashiers. Install touch-free hand sanitizer, where possible.

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas in the event of an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, with such cleaning and disinfection to include, at a minimum, all heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces . ✓ For take-out/delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide hand hygiene stations for customers waiting for food and/or drinks. • Ensure staff wash hands with soap/water or use hand sanitizer; if staff use gloves, regularly replace them. • If pick-up/delivery is indoors, ensure windows/doors are opened to allow for ventilation. ✓ Ensure all condiments provided directly to customers are in single-use disposable containers or reusable containers that are regularly cleaned/disinfected. ✓ If non-disposable menus are used, clean and disinfect the menus between each party’s use. ✓ Use pre-packaged silverware or pre-rolled silverware. Silverware must be pre-rolled while wearing masks and gloves. 	

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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines, and that you will implement them. ✓ Post signage to remind employees and patrons to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. ✓ Immediately notify the state and local health department if a worker was in close contact with others and tests positive for COVID-19. ✓ Cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts in the workplace, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations. ✓ Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use audio announcements, text messages or notices on screens to communicate with customers awaiting an order/seating. ✓ Establish a communications plan for employees, vendors, and customers that includes a consistent means to provide updated information.
Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement mandatory daily health screening practices (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) of their employees and, where practicable, vendors, but such screening shall not be mandated for customers and delivery personnel. ✓ At a minimum, screening must determine whether the employee or vendor has had: 1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. ✓ Designate a point-of-contact as the party for individuals to inform if they later are experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms, as noted in the questionnaire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prevent employees from intermingling in close or proximate contact with each other prior to completion of the screening (e.g. perform screening remotely). ✓ Screeners should be trained by employer-identified individuals familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols and wear appropriate PPE. ✓ Maintain a log of every person, including workers and vendors, who may have close or proximate contact with other individuals at the work site or area, such that all contacts may be identified, traced and notified in the event an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19; excluding customers and deliveries performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means. ✓ Provide option for, but do not require, customers to provide contact information so they can be logged and contacted for contact tracing. ✓ Refer to DOH guidance regarding protocols and policies for employees seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the employee had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

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