

Baltimore County Restaurant and Bars: Guidance and Best Practices During the COVID-19 Crisis

The following document is a list of best practices for restaurants and bars to follow to best protect customers, employees and the general public during the COVID-19 crisis. This list is not exhaustive, and restaurants are encouraged to look at other guidance documents provided by the agencies and organizations mentioned. Not all of the suggested actions will be possible for all restaurants, and owners and managers are encouraged to consult with government and industry sources on the best way to align their establishment's specific circumstances with the best possible public health practices.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19#operations>

National Restaurant Association

<https://restaurant.org/Articles/News/Association-issues-reopening-guidance>

Sanitation and hygiene

- Fully clean and sanitize the establishment before reopening for outdoor/indoor dining.
- Purchase cleaning supplies, facemasks and gloves.
- Display signage on door that prohibits anyone that is ill from entering.
- Enforce hand washing among staff.
- Require employees use cloth face coverings when near other employees and customers.
- Provide employees and customers with adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels and tissues.
- Frequently clean and disinfect counters, hard surfaces, door handles, cash registers, workstations, sink handles bathroom stalls and any other high touch areas
- After every use, clean and disinfect shared objects and spaces such as pens, payment terminals, tables, receipt trays and condiment holders.

Limiting the spread of disease

- Discontinue shared spaces such as salad bars, buffets, and beverage service stations that require customers to use common utensils or dispensers.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
- Replace reusable menus with disposal or digital menus.
- Replace condiment containers with single use packets.
- Switch to disposable utensils, dishes, napkins and tablecloths.
- Remove napkins holders, sugar packet holders and other similar items.
- If possible, utilize touchless payment options, touchless trashcans and touchless doors.
- Install Plexiglas or physical barriers in areas of frequent interaction.

Encouraging Social Distancing

- Limit party sizes and occupancy based on current CDC standards and ordinances put in place by Maryland and Baltimore County.
- Move the host stand outside, or consider eliminating the stand completely in favor of a completely digital system for appointments/reservations
- Close the waiting area and ask customers to wait outside or in their cars until they are notified that their table is ready.
- Consider having customers order virtually before entering.
- Adjust floor plans and seating arrangements to ensure parties are spaced at least six feet apart (person to person)
- Eliminate stools at the bar to create additional spacing.
- Add floor markers to remind customers and staff to socially distance.
- Establish clear entrances, exits, and flow of traffic.
- Time vendor deliveries and stagger employee shifts to limit total occupancy.
- Prioritize and encourage drive-through dining, curbside pickup, delivery service and outdoor seating.
- Provide signage that reminds patrons of social distancing guidelines.

Prioritize employee safety

- Educate employees to remain home when ill.
- Implement a daily screening process for all staff.
- Train employees in CDC workplace hygiene guidelines.
- Give employees flexible leave to determine (in consultation with a physician) when to return to the workplace.
- Communicate to sick employees that they should not return to work until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.