Best Practices for Businesses to Reopen

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

For more information go to open.maryland.gov/backtobusiness
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RESTAURANTS AND BARS

- Minimize congregating in common areas through signage, floor markings, barriers, and employee communications. Restrict access to areas where social distancing and social gathering requirements cannot be followed.

- No more than six people may be seated at a table.

- Customers need to be seated at the bar or at a table to be served and must comply with the appropriate social distancing guideline of at least 6 feet. Standing should not be permitted.

- Use a reservation system wherever possible to avoid crowding. Use phone apps, texting, or signs to let patrons know when their table or carryout order is ready. Avoid the use of pagers.

- Prepare guidance on facility capacity, how customers queue in and outside of the facility, and curbside pickup. Be mindful of creating situations that might cause lines and crowds.

- Post signage advising customers to not enter the establishment if they are sick or symptomatic. Provide a phone number or website for alternative purchasing methods, such as carryout or delivery, which should be encouraged.

- If possible, set aside special hours for vulnerable or at-risk customers.

OPEN FOR CLEANLINESS AND COMFORT

- Frequently clean and disinfect facilities per CDC guidelines, particularly high touch areas, and every table after each use. Use cleaners appropriate for food contact surfaces that still meet the EPA criteria for use against COVID-19.

- When removing soft goods from the table, place in a tote to await laundry service and launder the soft goods in the warmest water possible.

- The use of buffets or similar serving format shall not be used at this time.

- For customer comfort, place table settings after the party is seated, provide condiments in either single use containers or disinfected manufactured packaging. Use menu boards, disposable menus, or mobile ordering apps. If a facility uses regular menus, they must be cleaned and sanitized between each customer’s use.

- Multi-use amenities and unnecessary items such as magazines, coupons, menus and brochures should be removed from areas open to the public.

- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees and customers, particularly at key patron and employee entrances and contact areas where guests are likely to congregate.

- Where possible, implement and encourage touchless payment.

- Employees and customers should continue to wear facial coverings where applicable or required; removal of masks is appropriate when customers are consuming food and beverage.

- Provide disposable hand towels and trash bins in restrooms, so that customers can exit the restrooms without touching doors handles with clean bare hands.

OPEN FOR COMMUNICATIONS

- Communicate commitment to cleanliness by posting compliance adherence with the CDC’s guidelines.

- Show customers care by having signage that details social distancing protocol and COVID-19 prevention.

- Communicate with employees and guests on the measures taken for their comfort and on the shared responsibility to monitor their health and stay home if not feeling well.

- Communicate to guests in advance or during the reservation process about any changes to their dining experience, including procedures for seating, serving, ordering, paying and wearing face coverings.

- Prior to the guest’s visit, if possible, explain processes in place for their comfort, which includes social distancing, and increased hygiene practices per the CDC and MDH guidance and that you are open for business.

All Executive Orders still in effect must be complied with. See most up to date orders here: governor.maryland.gov/covid-19-pandemic-orders-and-guidance.