

## COVID-19 Guidelines for Re-Opening your Restaurant, Bar and other Food Service Premises

This guide provides you with the information you need to re-open your restaurant, bar or other food service premises. Part 1 provides advice on preparing your restaurant, bar or food premises for food service before reopening, and Part 2 helps you to provide food service after reopening.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please call Toronto Public Health (TPH) at 416-338-7600, email [DineSafe@toronto.ca](mailto:DineSafe@toronto.ca) or visit [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19).

Restaurants, bars and other food service premises must comply with [By-law 665-2020](#), which amends [Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licensing](#), as well as the [Stage 3 provincial regulation](#) issued under the [Reopening Ontario Act, 2020](#) (O Reg 364/20).

There is no requirement for restaurants, bars or other food premises to be inspected by Toronto Public Health before reopening. However, if you are opening a new restaurant, bar or other food premises, you must contact Toronto Public Health before opening to arrange for an inspection. You also must comply at all times with [Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#) made under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

### COVID-19 Transmission

[COVID-19](#) is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk.

It is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus may survive on plastic and metal surfaces for several hours.

### Main measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in restaurants, bars and other food premises

- [Physical distancing](#) by keeping a two metre/six foot distance from both staff and customers.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of all potentially contaminated surfaces.

### Additional protective measures to keep everyone safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash hands often. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a [face mask or covering](#) when in an enclosed, public setting.

**The following recommended actions apply both indoors and outdoors. Patios are encouraged wherever feasible.** Patios provide conditions which inhibit the survival and spread of the COVID-19 virus. Patios must also comply with all City of Toronto requirements, available online at [toronto.ca/cafeTO](https://toronto.ca/cafeTO).

## Part 1: Before Reopening

The following are recommended actions to be taken prior to opening your establishment for business:

### Develop Protocols/Policies

- As required under City bylaw, establish a COVID-19 screening protocol to be applied to each employee before they start a shift that consists of at least the [Toronto Public Health screening questionnaire](#). The screening protocol must be produced on request to any City enforcement officer.
- Staffing: stagger shifts, stagger breaks and lunch breaks, update absence policies, and new protocols for back filling absences.
  - In addition to implementing a screening protocol, operators should ensure that staff are not permitted to work if they show symptoms of COVID-19. Staff should report any symptoms developed during shift to their supervisor.
  - Staff should be aware of COVID-19 precautions, and physically distance as much as possible, including with other staff. Staff congregating can be a high risk for COVID-19 transmission.
- Train staff in proper use of gloves and masks. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses.
- Consider how to train staff on new procedures/requirements.
- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).
- Consider policies for customers: for example, reservations preferred/only; payment by card preferred/only.
- Cleaning and disinfecting: update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment.

### Prepare the Physical Space

- Check the condition of all food and discard expired or otherwise unfit products.
- Wash, rinse and sanitize all food contact surfaces.
- Ensure hand washing stations are adequate and functional.
- Clean and disinfect all non-food contact surfaces, including high touch areas such as door handles and equipment knobs.
- Check thoroughly for signs of pest activity. Consider contracting a licenced pest management company prior to opening to ensure there is no infestation.
- Clean, sanitize and ensure all hot and cold holding facilities/equipment are functional.

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- Where applicable, ensure dishwashing machines are functioning adequately.
  - Ensure adequate amounts of sanitizers and detergents are available for manual dishwashing.
  - Ensure garbage storage areas are clean and of adequate size for the needs.
  - Clean and disinfect washrooms, and ensure adequate supplies are available.
  - Ensure faucets are working properly and flush pipes for at least five minutes.
  - Remove waiting area seating, and create a process to ensure that customers stay separate and maintain physical distancing while waiting to be seated.
  - Demarcate the floor with markers for any areas where a line up may occur.
  - Keep chairs well away from high traffic areas if possible.
  - Rearrange equipment and/or processes in the kitchen and other areas used by staff so that a two metre/six foot distance is achievable at all times. If not feasible, staff must wear masks.
  - If necessary, rearrange pick-up by servers to maintain distance (e.g. use the bar as a serving area).
  - If necessary, install barriers (e.g. plexiglass) to protect staff (e.g. host desk) or customers (e.g. between back-to-back booths).
  - Remove buffet-style meal service, self-serve locations, and self-serve drink dispensing machines ([O Reg 364/20](#)).
  - Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
  - Provide direction to customers:
    - Install directional arrows (e.g. at entrance/exit) if possible.
    - Erect signage for physical distancing, [passive screening having customers screen themselves by following steps described on a poster](#), and any policies affecting customers.
  - The establishment must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:
    - a distance of at least two metres, or
    - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier ([O Reg 364/20](#))
  - Rearrange and/or remove seating and tables, or mark them as unavailable to ensure physical distancing
  - Menus: single-use paper, online for customers' mobile devices, menu-boards, chalkboards, or regular menus cleaned between uses.
  - Tables: do not pre-set tables; utensils should be rolled or packaged.
  - Table items: replace regular condiments with single-serve versions, or sanitise between uses, consider disposable napkins, etc.
- Signage: post [signs](#) on handwashing, physical distancing, reporting symptoms, and make them visible to staff and customers.

## Part 2: After Re-Opening

The following are recommended actions to be taken after opening your establishment for business:

### Cleaning

- Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, door handles, switches, table tops, chairs, sneeze guards, restrooms, taps, utensils and dispensers).
- Shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers.
- Consider installing devices such as automatic doors and lights, electronic taps, etc.
- Specify and obtain approved hard-surface cleaning materials. Thoroughly clean the premises before opening.
- More details on cleaning and disinfection are available at Public Health Ontario's Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings.
- Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs.

### Customers and Staff

- Supply dispensers for hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) to staff and customers, including at the door.
- Minimise unnecessary contact between customers and staff (e.g. place clearly visible numbers on tables and ask customers to seat themselves. Minimise the time staff spend within two metres/six feet of customers).
- Install directional arrows to direct employees and minimize direct contact.
- Have staff practice physical distancing during breaks.
- Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
- Ensure staff have access to gloves and masks as needed.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the correct technique, and to avoid touching the face.
- Keep a staff log of when and where staff worked, with contact information, in case it is required for contact tracing by public health.
- The owner/operator, or another person appointed for that purpose, should be present and checking to ensure adherence to protocols.
- Screening of staff for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in a food premises is critical. All measures must be taken to ensure staff are well before interacting with customers and colleagues. Ensure that active screening of each employee occurs before each shift using the [Toronto Public Health screening questionnaire \(By-law 665-2020\)](#). The questions can be completed on paper, online or by asking staff directly.
  - Do not allow staff members who are sick to come to work. If staff are sick they should go home and stay at home. They should also be advised to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) and/or contact their primary health provider and get tested.

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- Ensure that the number of customers permitted to be inside the establishment at any one time is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres/six feet from every other person in the establishment, and must not exceed 100 customers indoors (subject to any exemptions as determined by the Medical Officer of Health or their designate) ([By-law 665-2020](#)).
- Ensure that no more than 10 people are seated at each table in an indoor or outdoor area ([By-law 665-2020](#)).
- Operators of an adult entertainment club, billiard hall, eating or drinking establishment, entertainment establishment/nightclub or place of amusement can apply to the City for an [Indoor Dining Capacity Exemption](#).
- Ensure customers are physically distancing while waiting; have them wait outdoors when necessary, but ensure that they do not impinge on the space of diners on the patio.
- Customers who exhibit [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display [posters](#) telling customers if they have symptoms they cannot enter.
- Customers must be seated at all times in any area of the establishment in which food or drink is permitted except:
  - while entering the area and going to their table
  - while placing or picking up an order
  - while paying for an order
  - while exiting the area
  - while going to or returning from a washroom
  - while lining up to do any of the above, or
  - where necessary for the purposes of health and safety ([O Reg 364/20](#) and [By-law 665-2020](#)).
- Make sure that tables are cleaned and sanitized at least daily and between sittings.
- Consider opening doors and/or windows to increase ventilation.
- Dancing, singing or performing music is prohibited at the establishment except:
  - A person or group under contract with the establishment may dance, sing or perform music in compliance with the requirements set out in [O Reg 364/20](#)
  - Members of the public may sing or perform music at the establishment if:
    - they are separated from every other person, including from other performers, by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier while singing or while performing on a brass or wind instrument;
    - they maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person while singing or performing music; and
    - any equipment used by members of the public while singing or performing music is cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- It is advised to keep the volume of music, either live or recorded, at a reasonable level - one that does not cause customers to raise their voices or shout, thereby possibly increasing the risk of transmitting the virus.

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- Maintain a customer log ([O Reg 364/20](#) and [By-law 665-2020](#)):  
The person responsible for the establishment must:
  - use the [City's customer log template](#) to record the name and contact information of at least one member of every party of patrons that enters an indoor or outdoor dining area in the establishment, other than customers who temporarily enter the area to place, pick up or pay for a takeout order
  - record the date, check in and check out times, and location of seating (table number or location of the premises) for each party
  - maintain the records for a period of at least one month, after which the information should be destroyed, and
  - only disclose the records to a Medical Officer of Health or an inspector under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law.
- Post the Toronto Public Health [notice of collection sign](#) at all entrances (and at additional locations if required by the Medical Officer of Health or their designate), notifying the public about the collection of customer information.
- Encourage staff and customers to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

## Download and Print Posters for your Restaurant

[Physical distancing](#)

[Protect yourself](#)

[Cover your cough](#)

[How to safely put on and take off a mask](#)

[Posters and staff screening questionnaires](#)

[Reopening safety measures](#)

[Collecting contact information](#)

## Additional Resources

[Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules of Areas in Stage 3, issued under the Reopening Ontario Act, 2020](#)  
[By-law 665-2020](#)

[Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 545, Licensing](#)

[Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#)

[Customer Log Sheet for Food & Drink Establishments](#)

[Application for Indoor Dining Capacity Exemption](#)

[Province of Ontario Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)

**For more information:** Visit our website at [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19), email [DineSafe@toronto.ca](mailto:DineSafe@toronto.ca), or call us at 416-338-7600.