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COVID19 Prevention Checklist Industry Guidance

Last updated: Dec 4, 2020

The State of Maine has adopted a staged approach, supported by science, public health expertise, and industry collaboration, to allow Maine businesses to safely operate. The plan is available at www.maine.gov/covid19/restartingmaine.

This is one of many industry guidance documents that the State is preparing for businesses so they can be prepared to meet health guidelines and operate safely. Please make sure you pair this document with the general guidance document that applies to all industries, which is available on maine.gov/decd. Establishments with seated food and drink service include, but are not limited to, restaurants, bars, social clubs, tasting rooms, and establishments hosting catered events. The relevant components of the guidance below apply to these establishments even if only offering takeout and/or delivery services. (Updated 10/20/20)

This document replaced the COVID-19 Prevention Checklist for restaurants as of **October 13, 2020**. The reversion to an indoor gathering limit of 50 people for seated service establishments, as described below, will go into effect **November 4, 2020**. Note: Bars, breweries, and tasting rooms must remain outdoor-only until further notice. (Updated 11/1/20)

Establishments with seated food and drink service vary significantly in terms of size, seating arrangement, and model (e.g., wait service, counter service, window service). In all cases, establishments must take active measures to minimize risk to customers and employees through physical distancing, occupancy limits, facial coverings, hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfecting. Establishments must take measures to prevent mingling and congregating of customers—especially in waiting areas and at bars and counters. Examples of these measures include designating staff to enforce physical distancing at bars and in waiting areas, establishing queues of customers with demarcated 6-foot physical distancing spacing in waiting areas, and posting signage reminding customers of the importance of physical distancing.

Please note: This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available.

Seated Food and Drink Service

Beginning Friday, November 20, 2020 through Sunday, January 3, 2021, Seated Food and Drink Service establishments must close for the night by 9:00 p.m. This does not apply to take-out or delivery. (Updated 12/4/20)

General guidance

1. Require all staff, vendors, and patrons to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group or dining party whenever possible.
 1. To facilitate physical distancing among patrons, dining tables must be spaced to ensure that guests of separate parties are no less than 6 feet apart when seated.
 2. Ensure employees stay 6 feet apart whenever practical.
2. Require all staff, vendors, and patrons to wear a face covering, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 1. Require employees to wear cloth face coverings. Because employees may be in an enclosed space for a prolonged period, it is important for them to wear face coverings even when physically distanced.
 2. It is acceptable for kitchen staff to wear a face shield in lieu of a face covering when the kitchen or weather is warm and would cause face coverings to become wet or soiled quickly. Face shields must extend below the chin and back to the ears. A face shield is primarily for eye protection for the person wearing it. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for controlling the spread of COVID-19 to others.
 3. Customers must wear face coverings at all times, including when seated at the table, except while eating or drinking. Customers are strongly encouraged to put on their face covering any time there is waitstaff at the table (e.g., when taking orders, delivering food or drink, bussing tables). Customers must wear face coverings when interacting with employees at a pick-up window, curbside pick-up area, or drive-thru. (Updated 11/5/20)
3. Establishments must comply with the following occupancy limits for indoor and outdoor seated food and drink service: (Updated 11/4/20)
 1. For indoor seated gatherings, the total number of people at any one time must be no more than 50 per room, with no more than two rooms used. This includes front-of-house staff. Tables should be spaced to ensure that guests of separate parties are no less than 6 feet apart when seated. (Updated 11/4/20)
 2. For outdoor seated gatherings, the occupancy limit is 100 people. This includes front-of-house staff. Establishments with outdoor seating should ensure that they have a back-up plan for outdoor seating that adheres to physical distance requirements in case of inclement weather.
 3. The amount of space needed to safely seat patrons will vary based on a number of factors, including the layout of the establishment. Establishments need to include six feet of physical distancing, room for seating and patron ability to sit and stand, room on the sides for patrons to be able to reach their seats, and central aisles or egress routes.
 4. If an establishment cannot accommodate the maximum occupancy limit and the physical distance requirements, occupancy must be further limited to allow for compliance with physical distance requirements.

Employees

1. Staff should consider whether they can work safely if they have any of these conditions and managers should discuss potential risks for individuals with the following:
 1. People 65 or older
 2. People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 3. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
 1. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 2. People who have serious heart conditions
 3. People who are immunocompromised: Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 4. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)

5. People with diabetes
 6. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 7. People with liver disease
2. Staff must stay at home if they are sick. Supervisors must ask all staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms using either of the following approaches: (Updated 10/20/20)
1. Use an electronic or app-based self-screening form, such as the Coronavirus Self-Checker available on the [federal CDC's COVID-19 homepage](#).
 2. Self-screen using the following questions:
 1. Do you feel ill or have you been caring for someone who is ill?
 2. In the past two weeks, have you been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19?
3. Require employees to wear cloth face coverings. It is acceptable for kitchen staff to wear face shields in lieu of face coverings when the kitchen or weather is warm and would cause face coverings to become wet or soiled quickly. Face shields must extend below the chin and back to the ears. There is currently not enough evidence to support the effectiveness of face shields for controlling the spread of COVID-19 to others.
1. Individuals wearing a face shield should wash their hands before and after removing the face shield and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth when removing the face shield.
 2. Face shields should be disposed of according to manufacturer instructions.
 3. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use according to manufacturer instructions or by following [CDC face shield cleaning instructions](#). Sharing of face shields is discouraged.
4. Good hand hygiene prevents spread of disease. The best hand hygiene is frequent handwashing. Remind employees to practice good hand hygiene with frequent handwashing and hand sanitizing especially between contact with customers and customer items.
5. Gloves are not a replacement for good hygiene. If employees wear gloves, they must be changed between customers and activities. Used gloves should be thrown out in a lined trashcan and glove wearers should wash their hands after taking off the gloves.
6. Hand sanitizer may not be used in place of handwashing for food production.
7. Where possible, stagger employee shifts and meal breaks to avoid crowding in common work areas.
8. Ensure employees stay 6 feet apart whenever practical.
9. Adjust seating in break rooms and other common areas to reflect physical distancing practices.
10. Unnecessary gatherings or meetings of employees during working hours are strongly discouraged.
11. Permit employees to take breaks outside, or in such other areas where physical distancing is attainable.
12. Do not allow employee food or drink in food service areas.
13. If possible, keep staff work groups to same days/shifts to minimize staff exposures.
14. Minimize customer and staff interactions by assigning wait staff to certain tables/areas of the establishment.
15. Limit interaction between employees and outside visitors or delivery drivers; implement touchless receiving practices if possible.
16. Adjust training and new employee orientation to limit number of people involved and allow for 6 foot spacing; use virtual/video/audio training when possible.
17. Limit sharing of handheld equipment, phones, desks, workstations, and other tools and equipment between employees to the extent possible.
18. Provide employee training for:
1. hand hygiene
 2. physical distancing guidelines and expectations
 3. monitoring personal health
 4. proper wear, removal, disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

5. laundering of face coverings and uniforms: [see CDC, Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, How to Disinfect: Laundry](#)
6. cleaning protocols, including how to safely and effectively use cleaning supplies: [see CDC, Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)
19. Consider employee training in safe de-escalation techniques.
20. Entertainment personnel must follow physical distancing and face covering guidelines.
 1. Performances at indoor establishments with food and drink service may not include singing or the playing of brass or woodwind instruments.
 2. Performers must maintain face coverings and physical distancing at all times, except for the immediate period during which a performance makes it impractical (e.g., while playing a brass instrument at an outdoor establishment).
 3. For performances in outdoor settings: (Updated 10/20/20)
 1. Activities like singing or using a projected voice project respiratory droplets in greater quantity and over greater distance, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, particularly with prolonged exposure. Maintain at least 14 feet of separation—and more if possible—between audience members and performers such as vocalists and singers. Maximize physical spacing between singers on-stage. Face shields are recommended for singers, if practical.
 2. Where possible, install barriers to minimize travel of respiratory droplets from vocalists and brass and woodwind instruments. Set up bands to maximize physical distancing between musicians. Consider installing sneeze guards/mute shields between musicians, if possible.
 4. Any entertainment activity that encourages congregation of people in a small space is not allowed. No mingling, dancing, or congregating is allowed.

Customers

1. Inform customers of your COVID-19 policies and procedures in advance, if possible, via website, social media channels, etc. This information should include the request that individuals not come to the establishment if they are experiencing symptoms (e.g., fever, cough).
2. Place signage at entrances and throughout the establishment, particularly in high traffic areas such as service counters and host stands, alerting customers to required occupancy limits, physical distancing requirements, face covering policies, and symptoms of COVID-19.
3. All establishments must implement measures requiring customers to wear face coverings.
4. Customers must wear face coverings at all times, including when seated at the table, except while eating or drinking. Customers are strongly encouraged to put on their face covering any time there is waitstaff at the table (e.g., when taking orders, delivering food or drink, bussing tables). (Updated 11/5/20)
5. Customers must wear face coverings when interacting with employees at a pick-up window, curbside pick-up area, or drive-thru. (Updated 11/5/20)
6. Guests who are subject to identification check may be required to briefly lower a face covering to verify their identity with government-issued identification cards.
7. The maximum group party size is 8 people. Patrons must remain with their dining party and not mix with other dining parties.
8. All patrons at tables, bars, and counters must have a seat and must be in their seats except when walking in, picking up their order (if applicable), traveling to and from the restroom, and leaving the establishment. Customers should not stand/mingle in any counter or bar area (i.e., groups should not interact with each other).
9. Children need to remain seated with their party. No play areas or shared toys; single use crayons only.

Occupancy and seating

1. Establishments must comply with the following occupancy limits for indoor and outdoor dining: (Updated 11/4/20)
 1. For indoor seated gatherings, the total number of people at any one time must be no more than 50 per room, with no more than two rooms used. This includes front-of-house staff. (Updated 11/4/20)

2. For outdoor seated gatherings, the occupancy limit is 100 people. This includes front-of-house staff. Establishments with outdoor seating should ensure that they have a back-up plan for outdoor seating that adheres to physical distance requirements in case of inclement weather.
3. If an establishment cannot accommodate the maximum occupancy limit and the physical distance requirements, occupancy must be further limited to allow for compliance with physical distance requirements.
2. The amount of space needed to safely seat patrons will vary based on a number of factors including the layout of the establishment. Establishments need to include 6 feet of physical distancing, room for seating and patron ability to sit and stand, room on the sides for patrons to be able to reach their seats, and central aisles or egress routes.
3. Tables must be spaced to ensure that guests of separate parties are no less than 6 feet apart when seated.
4. In areas with bar or counter seating take steps to ensure 6 feet of physical distancing is maintained between dining parties, between patrons and wait staff, and between patrons and bar items such as clean glassware and ice.
5. Consider installing non-porous physical barriers such as partitions or plexiglass barriers to protect patrons and staff. Barriers should be installed in areas where it is difficult to maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance.
 1. In establishments with booth seating, physical barriers are acceptable, as long as they are a minimum height of 6 feet and extend the entire length of the booth.
 2. If 6 feet of physical distance is difficult to maintain at a bar or counter, physical barriers should be placed between customers and the staff working behind the bar or counter.
 3. Customers sitting at a bar or counter must maintain 6 feet of physical distance from customers that are not part of their dining group. Alternatively, physical barriers can be installed between customer seats at a bar or counter, as long as they are a minimum of 6 feet tall and extend a foot behind the customer's seat.
6. Limit activities that require staff and/or visitors to enter within 6 feet of another person, regardless of whether physical barriers are installed.
7. Customers at a bar or counter must remain seated; no standing service is allowed.
8. All patrons at tables, bars, and counters must have a seat and must be in their seats except when walking in, picking up their order (if applicable), traveling to and from the restroom, and leaving the establishment.
9. If an establishment allows patrons to seat themselves, it must develop a system for ensuring that seating areas are cleaned and disinfected between uses.
10. Establishments may choose to use enclosures for individual outdoor tables to provide increased warmth and/or weather protection. If using individualized eating enclosures:
 1. The enclosure must be limited to one party (maximum group party size of 8 people) and one server.
 2. Enable ventilation within the enclosure to the extent practicable, weather permitting.
 3. When serving these enclosures, employees should:
 1. Not enter the enclosure while guests are inside
 2. Wear a face covering and shield or other eye protection
 3. Pass food inside the enclosure on trays if possible, to avoid entering.

Seating procedures

1. Use call ahead or online reservations as a best practice.
2. Establishments may use phone calls, a text alert, or intercom system to alert guests that their table is ready. Do not hand out electronic or paging devices to customers as a means of notification that their table is ready.
3. Maintain physical distancing protocols during guest check-in and seating. Only one member of a party may wait inside in the waiting area and must remain at least 6 feet apart from individuals outside of their dining party.
4. Avoid crowding at establishment entrance and maintain physical distancing in any waiting line. This can be accomplished by demarcating 6-foot distances on floors or walls.

Building and operational considerations

1. Bar areas within restaurants must close at the same time the kitchen closes for dining patrons.
2. Establishments that require customers to leave their seats to order and/or pick up their food must take active measures to mitigate crowding and enforce face covering requirements in ordering and pick up areas.
 1. Establish queues of customers with demarcated 6-foot spacing.
 2. Establish one-way traffic patterns in areas where customers order and/or pick up food. Use floor decals and/or signage to establish travel patterns.
 3. Post signage in ordering/pick up areas reminding customers of the importance of maintaining physical distance and wearing their face covering.
 4. Self-serve buffets, salad bars, and topping bars are prohibited at this time. Buffets at which waitstaff serve customers are permitted. All staff and customers must wear face coverings while in the buffet area and physical distancing must be maintained to the greatest extent possible.
 5. A staff member should monitor customer flow and distancing in ordering/pick up areas.
3. Continue utilizing take out, curbside, and delivery options for customers. Both customers and waitstaff should be wearing their face coverings during interactions.
4. Consider allowing expanded seasonal outdoor dining, with distancing protocols, in parking lots, sidewalks and expanded patios, etc.
5. Consider offering exclusive hours to seniors and other high-risk individuals.
6. Consider adjusting hours of operation, as necessary, to support physical distancing efforts by limiting number of patrons in the establishment at one time.
7. Widen high-traffic areas to the extent possible.
8. Note that staff or customer use of elevators or escalators will require regular attention to physical distance guidelines and frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces.
9. Minimize shared touch surfaces such as kiosks, tablets, pens, credit cards, receipts and keys.
10. Provide hand sanitizer for customers and employee use, including at establishment entrance.
11. For contact tracing purposes, maintain records of customers, including one customer name and contact information per party, the server of the table, and the date they were in the establishment, for at least 21 days. This does not apply to counter- and window-service establishments without waitstaff.
12. Limit restroom occupancy for group restrooms to incorporate physical distancing and avoid formation of waiting lines outside of restrooms.
13. Menus should be laminated or plastic covered and cleaned and disinfected after each use, or provide single use paper menus. Establishments may encourage patrons to view menus online.
14. Provide only single use condiments at this time.
15. Food or drink items should be served to patrons, rather than having patrons take items from a common tray.
16. Minimize other self-service areas such as drink stations. To the extent possible, use contactless dispensers to minimize contact with surfaces. Replace multi-use condiments with single-serve packets. Other suggestions to minimize multi-touch surfaces include providing single-wrap utensils, straws, and lids provided at any take-out or self-seating point of sale. Self-service areas require frequent cleaning and disinfection.
17. Prohibit use of self-serve snacks or beverages that are shared between dining parties (e.g., pitchers or water, bowls of popcorn or peanuts on a bar or counter).
18. It is recommended that establishments use disposable napkins and table covers instead of cloth linens. If cloth linens are used, they must be changed between customers. Dirty linens should be transported from dining areas in sealed bags.
19. Utensils and dishes used by customers should be treated as potentially contaminated and be handled carefully. Wash hands after bussing tables and handling used tableware. If gloves are used during bussing of tables, gloves must be changed between tables, and proper hand hygiene followed by staff before new gloves are donned.
 1. Use rolled silverware or disposable utensils to avoid directly handling silverware.
 2. Do not preset tables.

3. Use single-use drink coasters.
 4. Avoid refilling glasses. Replace with a clean glass if offering refills. For mug club programs, mugs must be fully cleaned and sanitized before refilling. (Updated 10/20/20)
 5. Do not leave card stands, flyers, napkin holders, or other items on tables.
20. Have customers box their own leftovers.
21. All amenities not employed for food and beverage service (e.g., pool tables, darts, corn hole, playgrounds, etc.) within eating and drinking areas must be closed or removed to prevent gathering of customers. These types of amenities are allowable if housed in a distinct room or cordoned-off area in which customers wear face coverings at all times. Food and drink must not be allowed in these game areas. Patrons must not move back and forth between the eating/drinking and game areas and must be reseated if they wish to enter or re-enter the food and drink service section of the establishment. Staff must monitor the areas to ensure adherence to these guidelines. (Updated 10/20/20)
22. Adequate ventilation is required, with establishments having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open windows and door to exhaust air. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling) to individuals in the establishment. Additional information on [readying ventilation systems](#) is available from the U.S. CDC.

Cleaning and disinfection

1. Seating areas, including chairs, benches, tables, bars, and counters, must be cleaned and disinfected between each seating.
2. Require regular and frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas and common areas that are accessible to staff, customers, and suppliers. Note the focus areas of cleaning include:
 1. Door and drawer handles
 2. Light and other power switches (consider signage to keep lights on at all times, or utilizing exiting motion sensor capabilities)
 3. Shared tools
 4. Chairs, tables, and benches
 5. Refrigerators, microwaves, taps, oven doors, grill and range knobs, garnish containers, and other frequently touched objects and surfaces in service areas
 6. Time clocks
 7. Entry way
 8. Cash register, including touch screens, keyboards, mouse
 1. PIN Pads (touch screen, keypad, and pen)
 10. Restrooms
 1. Toilet bowl, toilet paper holder, and flush lever
 2. Sinks and faucets
 3. Paper towel holders and/or air dryers
 4. Diaper-changing stations
3. Use EPA-approved cleaning and disinfectant products to wipe down dining room tables and chairs after each party.
4. Provide sanitization materials, such as sanitizing wipes, to employees to clean handhelds/wearables or other work tools and equipment before/after use.
5. Ensure personnel are provided adequate downtime between shifts for thorough cleaning.
6. Consider providing cleaning “kits” including disinfectant wipes or sprays, disposable gloves, paper towels, cloth face coverings, hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies that are readily accessible throughout the establishment for areas that will be cleaned periodically throughout the day.

Deliveries and vendors

1. Establish protocols for regular disinfection and handling of received material shipments and inventoried materials.
2. Establish protocols for handling and processing shipping and receipts (including disinfection).
3. Advise contractors, drivers, and vendors that they are required to wear cloth face coverings while on the premises.
4. Notify vendors of re-opening, and any revised protocol as it relates to store entry, deliveries, paperwork, etc.
5. Consider implementing measures to ensure vendor safety, including:
 1. Disabling/suspending access (e.g., suspending all non-employee delivery drivers from entering restaurant).
 2. Transitioning to contactless signatures/e-signatures for deliveries.
 3. Where practical, adjusting store delivery times to spread out deliveries.
6. Request that vendors direct their employees to follow all physical distancing guidelines and health directives issued by the applicable public authorities.

Sales

1. Promote "Contactless" payment options:
 - Online shopping
 - Contactless payment options
 - Self-checkout
 - Pickup and delivery services
2. Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) after handling cash.
3. Consider increasing pickup hours to serve more online customers.
4. Consider adding physical barriers such as partitions or plexiglass barriers at registers.

Additional Considerations for Outdoor Service

This addendum summarizes public health considerations from Maine CDC's Health Inspection Program (HIP) regarding restaurants in Maine moving toward outdoor dining operations.

Considerations when Setting up Outside Dining Areas:

1. Tables should be spaced to ensure that guests of separate parties are no less than 6 feet apart when seated.
2. Follow Maine Food Code requirements for food safety and protection from outside elements.
3. If restaurants prohibit or discourage patrons from going inside, restaurants must provide handwashing stations outdoors.
4. If restaurants prohibit or discourage patrons from going inside, provide portable toilets per Internal Plumbing Code, as needed. Restaurants must also ensure that a contract is in place to maintain emptying and cleanliness of such facilities. Hand washing stations must be placed near these facilities to ensure that customers can practice good hand hygiene.
5. For establishments on private septic systems, remain within allowed seating capacity on Health Inspection Program eating place license. This will avoid having to review septic system capacity. If on municipal sewer, this is not an issue. If an owner wishes to increase capacity beyond its current license, they should contact the Health Inspection Program.
6. Take necessary measures to prevent odor, insect, rodent, road dust and other nuisance conditions.
7. Provide adequate lighting for outside dining areas. Additional electrical system and equipment may be needed for service.
8. Consider municipal safety issues: use of sidewalks, parking lots, zoning, street lighting, and installation of barriers to protect customers.
9. Consider the accessibility of refuse containers and frequency of emptying of refuse.
10. Clean and disinfect tables before establishment opens each day to eliminate contaminants that may have settled on surfaces. Continue with normal cleaning procedures in between uses.
11. Must be authorized by municipality and BABLO (if alcohol being served) for new outside seating areas.

- 12. Provide signs stating alcoholic beverages must stay in designated areas.
- 13. Plan for inclement weather - set up fire rated tents.
- 14. The free airflow of outdoor spaces lowers the transmission risk of COVID-19, which is primarily transmitted through the air. Closing a tent removes that benefit. For that reason, businesses that use tents for their customers need to keep at least two sides open and unimpeded to maintain air exchange and flow, even if there is inclement weather. All physical distancing and occupancy guidelines apply to tented spaces.
- 15. Review location for tripping hazards-cobblestones, tree limbs, roots, uneven pavement, etc.
- 16. Note that Maine law [prohibits smoking or vaping](#) in areas where food or beverage service is offered. For questions or free signage, contact your local [District Tobacco Prevention Partner](#).

Credit

Information

Business in Maine

DECD Offices

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Commemorating 200
Years of Statehood

