

COVID-19 in the Workplace: Restaurants and Bars

A guide for employers

The more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in a restaurant or bar setting as follows:

- **Lowest risk:** Food service limited to drive-through, delivery, take-out, and curbside pick-up.
- **More risk:** Drive-through, delivery, take-out, and curbside pick-up emphasized. On-site dining limited to outdoor seating. Seating capacity reduced to allow tables to be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- **Even more risk:** On-site dining with both indoor and outdoor seating. Seating capacity reduced to allow tables to be spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- **Highest risk:** On-site dining with both indoor and outdoor seating. Seating capacity that is **not** reduced and tables **not** spaced at least 6 feet apart.

COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. There are a number of actions operators of restaurants and bars can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Restaurants and bars can implement several strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 among employees and customers.

Recognize signs and symptoms

If possible, conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or or symptom checking) of staff safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Visit [eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws](https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws) for more information.

Isolate those who are sick

Make sure that employees know they should not come to



work if they are sick, and they should notify their manager or other designated COVID-19 point of contact if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a probable or suspected case. Immediately separate employees or customers with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath). Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are.

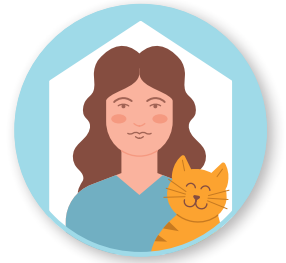
Clean and disinfect

Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them.

Stay home when appropriate

Individuals can spread COVID-19 even before they develop symptoms, and individuals who are infectious (spreading the virus) may not have any symptoms. The symptoms of COVID-19 are wide ranging from a loss of taste and smell to severe respiratory issues.

JCDHE recommends employers exclude employees/patrons who have at least one of the primary symptoms or two or more of the secondary symptoms. Employees with symptoms should consult with a health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 or obtain an alternative diagnosis. If an employee only has one secondary symptom, employers may consider excluding them from work until 24 hours after their symptom resolves.



Primary symptoms (at least one)

- Cough
- Fever (measured or subjective)
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of taste and/or smell

Secondary symptoms (at least two)

- Chills
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea/nausea/vomiting
- Congestion/runny nose
- Extreme fatigue

When a case of COVID-19 occurs in the Workplace

When a COVID-19 positive individual may return to work

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 should be excluded from work until:

- At least 24 hours have passed since their fever disappeared (without the use of fever-reducing medications);
and
- Symptoms have improved;
and
- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms began.

JCDHE does not recommend requiring a negative COVID-19 test result before returning to work. A COVID-19 positive individual is no longer infectious if they have been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of medication), their symptoms have improved, and it's been at least 10 days since their symptoms began. It is possible for an individual to test positive for a period of time after their symptoms go away. This does not mean they are still infectious.

Close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual

If JCDHE interviews a COVID-positive individual and they worked while infectious and may have exposed other individuals, JCDHE will notify the employer and work with them to identify potentially exposed individuals.

An exposed individual is anyone who the COVID-positive individual had 'close contact' with **starting three days before their onset of symptoms, or their test date if they're not showing any symptoms.** Coronavirus is spread through respiratory droplets (spit) of someone who is infected; it spreads efficiently in enclosed areas (e.g., enclosed offices, vehicles, etc.).

A 'close contact' is considered:

- Being within 6 feet of someone for 10 minutes or more (these 10 minutes are cumulative, so in a place of employment the easiest way to identify these contacts is anyone the individual would have had multiple face-to-face conversations with)
- Being in an enclosed room with the individual who tested positive for more than 10 minutes
- Eating with the COVID-19 positive individual in a break room
- Riding with the COVID-19 positive individual in a vehicle
- Having physical contact with a COVID-19 positive individual

When to exclude employees

Individuals who are identified as having close contact with the COVID-19 positive individual and were unmasked or not wearing a mask properly will need to be excluded from work for 14 days from their *last* contact with the COVID-19 positive individual and quarantine at home.

These employees do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless their health care provider advises them to do so. If the exposed employee is tested during their 14-day quarantine and is negative for COVID-19, they still need to complete the 14-day quarantine before returning to work, as symptoms can take up to 14 days to develop.

Employees that do NOT need to be excluded

If employees (the ill individual and his/her contacts) were always wearing masks properly (covering nose and mouth), then people identified as close contacts are at a lower risk of infection and do not need to be excluded.

Individuals who were in the office at the same time as the positive employee, but farther away than 6 feet and limited contact (less than 10 minutes) do **not** need to be excluded, but can be notified of the exposure and reminded that COVID-19 is in our community and all residents should be monitoring themselves for signs and symptoms, wearing masks when in public, maintaining physical distance of 6 feet or more from other

individuals and washing hands frequently with soap and water. These employees do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless their health care provider advises them to do so.

Employees who are a close contact of someone outside the workplace



Employees may be notified that they are a close contact of a COVID-positive individual outside the workplace (e.g., family member, social contact, etc.). These employees should be excluded from work for 14 days following their last interaction with the positive individual. If the close contact is a household member who is unable to isolate themselves away from the other household members, this may result in an individual being excluded from work for longer than 14 days (14 day quarantine from the last day the household member was infectious, which is at least 10 days after their onset of symptoms).

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

Require frequent employee handwashing (e.g. before, during, and after preparing food; after touching garbage) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence.

Encourage employees to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Adequate supplies

Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors. Supplies include soap, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (placed on every table, if supplies allow), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans.

Cloth face coverings

Require the use of cloth face coverings among all staff, as feasible. Face coverings are essential when physical distancing is difficult. Information should be provided to staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.



How to wear your mask correctly:

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask.
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face.
- Make sure you can breathe easily.

Wear a mask to protect others

- Wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth to help protect others in case you're infected with COVID-19 but don't have symptoms.
- Wear a mask in public settings when around people who don't live in your household, especially when it may be difficult for you to stay 6 feet apart.

- Wear a mask correctly for maximum protection.
- Don't put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead.
- Don't touch the mask, and, if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer to disinfect.

Take off your mask carefully when you're at home

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place mask in the washing machine
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing.

Note: Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:

- Babies and children younger than 2 years old
- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance

Signs and messages

Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face covering.

Include messages about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with vendors, staff, and customers (such as on business websites, in emails, and on social media accounts).

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Cleaning and disinfection

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, cash registers, workstations, sink handles, bathroom stalls) at least daily, or as much as possible and as required by food safety requirements. Use products that meet EPA guidelines and are appropriate for the surface, following the manufacturer's recommendations. Clean shared objects (e.g., payment terminals, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays, condiment holders) between each use.

Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of disinfectants to avoid food contamination and harm to employees and other individuals. This includes storing products securely away from children.

Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands thoroughly after removing gloves.



Shared objects

Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.

Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials (e.g., serving spoons) to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of workers at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

Avoid using or sharing items that are reusable, such as menus, condiments, and any other food containers. Instead, use disposable or digital menus, single serving condiments, and no-touch trash cans and doors.

Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available. Ask customers and employees to exchange cash or card payments by placing on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand to hand contact. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use and encourage patrons to use their own pens.

Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes, napkins, tablecloths). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water, or in a dishwasher. Change and launder linen items (e.g., napkins and tablecloths) after each customer or party's use.

Employees should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after handling used food service items.

Avoid use of food and beverage utensils and containers brought in by customers.

Ventilation

Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors and prioritizing outdoor seating.

Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to customers or employees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).

Modified layouts and procedures

Change restaurant and bar layouts to ensure that all customer parties remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., marking tables/stools that are not for use). Limit seating capacity to allow for social distancing.

Offer drive-through, curbside take out, or delivery options as applicable. Prioritize outdoor seating as much as possible.

Ask customers to wait in their cars or away from the building while waiting to pick up food or to be seated. Inform customers of food pickup and dining protocols on the business' website and on posted signs.

Discourage crowded waiting areas by using phone app, text technology, or signs to alert patrons when their table is ready. Avoid using "buzzers" or other shared objects.

Consider options for dine-in customers to order ahead to limit time spent in the establishment.

Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations.

Physical barriers and guides

Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart. Barriers can be useful in restaurant kitchens and at cash registers, host stands, or food pickup areas where maintaining physical distance of at least 6 feet is difficult.

Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signage, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart. Consider providing these guides where lines form, in the kitchen, and at the bar.

Communal spaces

Close shared spaces such as break rooms, if possible; otherwise stagger use and clean/disinfect between use.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Restaurants and bars may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations.

Protections for employees at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19

Offer options for employees at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limits their exposure risk (e.g., modified job responsibilities such as managing inventory rather than working as a cashier, or managing administrative needs through telework).

Consistent with applicable law, develop policies to protect the privacy of persons at higher risk for severe illness in accordance with applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.

Regulatory awareness

Be aware of local or state policies and recommendations related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.

Staggered or rotated shifts and sittings

Rotate or stagger shifts to limit the number of employees in the restaurant or bar at the same time. Stagger and limit dining times to minimize the number of customers in the establishment.

Gatherings

Avoid group events, gatherings, or meetings where at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained.

Travel and Transit

For employees who commute to work using public transportation or ride sharing, encourage them to use transportation options that minimize close contact with others (e.g., walking or biking, driving or riding by car – alone or with household members only) or consider offering the following support:

Allow employees to shift their hours so they can commute during less busy times. Ask employees to wash their hands as soon as possible after their trip.

Designated COVID-19 point of contact

If possible, designate a staff person for each shift to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff members should know who this person is and how to contact them.

Leave (Time Off) Policies

Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable employees to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, or caring for someone who is sick.

Leave policies should be flexible and not punish people for taking time off and should allow sick employees to stay home and away from co-workers. Leave policies should also account for employees who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members.

Staff Training

Train all employees in safety actions. Conduct training virtually, or ensure that social distancing is maintained during training.