

## Worcester County Health Department

### Reopening Guidance for Facilities with Indoor Seating During COVID-19

This guidance is intended for food service facilities that provide indoor seating during COVID-19.

- Tables must be placed so that there is a minimum of six (6) feet of separation between chairs while customers are dining. Any tables that do not meet this requirement must either be removed or excluded. Booths, if not removable, must meet the six (6) feet of separation by excluding every other booth. **Physical barriers (i.e.: plexiglass dividers) do not meet the requirement for separation.**
- No groups larger than six (6) persons are to be seated together, except members of the same household.
- All tables and booths must be smooth, easily cleanable, and non-absorbent.
- All contact surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected with an EPA approved disinfectant for use against COVID-19 prior to opening each day. This includes but is not limited to: tables, chairs, booths, reusable menus, etc.
- The facility must post signage informing patrons not to enter if sick, hand washing reminders and cover your cough reminders. Resources can be found at: <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/lhd-resources>.
- The number of patrons in the food service establishment shall not exceed 50% of the food service establishment's maximum occupancy.
- Management must conduct staff screening every day in order to exclude any potentially ill employees. Questionnaires should be used as a screening tool. Management should follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines regarding sick employees.
- Facilities should provide staff with information pertaining to COVID-19 signs and symptoms.
- Staff and patrons must wear facial coverings pursuant to Executive Order # 20-04-15-01. Patrons may only remove facial coverings while seated at their table.
- Customers that are waiting to be seated must abide by social distancing guidelines of six (6) feet of separation and must not exceed the Executive Order on gatherings of more than ten (10) people. Any area where there is a potential for a line to form must have a visual six (6) feet marking system to demonstrate the recommended social distancing. It is recommended where applicable that customers wait in their vehicles until their table is ready. Handheld pagers are not recommended. Consider utilizing phones, phone apps, or texting to notify patrons when their table is ready.
- The entrance and exit to the dining area must be clearly marked. All pedestrian traffic should be one way only where possible.
- Paper menus that can be discarded after each use are recommended. Any reusable menus must be cleaned and disinfected between patrons. Consider using contactless ordering and payment.
- The food service establishment shall not serve customers who are not seated.
- **Buffet service is not allowed at this time.**
- Consider eliminating any self service station such as beverage dispensing. If applicable, have staff dispense patron beverages.
- Tables, chairs, and booths must be cleaned and disinfected between patron usage.
- Bathrooms must be cleaned and disinfected per disinfectant manufacturer requirements regarding product application or when usage necessitates cleaning. Any line that forms for the bathroom must meet the aforementioned visual marking system requirement.
- Hand sanitizer must be made readily available to staff and patrons. Hand sanitizer does not negate the need for hand washing.
- It is recommended that all condiments are either pre-packaged in the kitchen or provided as single use items.
- Single use items must either be pre-packaged or pre-wrapped and given out per customer request. Any single service item left on the table, whether used or unused, must be discarded after customer dining.
- Staff must wash their hands upon changing tasks or exposure to potentially contaminated items.
- Staff are reminded to not have bare hand contact with ready to eat foods.
- Patrons seated at the bar must comply with the appropriate social distancing guideline of at least six (6) feet. **Standing is not permitted in the bar area.**
- At the close of the business, the facility must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Please refer to the National Restaurant Association COVID-19 Reopening Guide, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the CDC for more information.

**These guidelines are for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.**