

Restaurant Industry

The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state’s economy.



Tennessee
Pledge

Restaurant Industry

As of May 22, 2020

Safeguarding Guidance

The State recommends strict adherence to [CDC](#) and [FDA](#) guidelines, as well as the Universal Guidelines for All Businesses. Additionally, the State recommends restaurants put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days (Note: does not apply to healthcare workers equipped with proper PPE)?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- **Have dedicated face coverings** (i.e., only used by one person) worn by all employees, at all times, unless unsafe for certain back-of-house work functions
 - Masks should not be N-95 or medical variety, which should be reserved for use by healthcare workers
- **Highlight importance of regular handwashing** for all employees per CDC guidance, not to supersede any regulations requiring the wearing of gloves for any food preparation or other tasks
- **Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible—“Further is safer”**
- **Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas** and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible
- **Stagger shifts, breaks and meals** in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations to maintain social distancing



- **Employees should increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing
- **All employees should stay home if feeling ill**, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee's household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms
- **Update the Employee Illness Policy** to include the symptoms of "COVID-19" or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation
- **Post signage on health policies**, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- **Follow sanitization frequency guidance** contained in this document at all times
- **Provide ServSafe COVID-19 training** for all food handlers as soon as possible

Consumer Protection

- **Limit tables to no more than 10 guests per table**, per CDC guidance on group sizes
- **Mark any indoor or outdoor waiting area so that social distancing standards are met** (options can include a text system to alert guests of available seating, an intercom system, or only one member of a party being allowed to wait in the waiting area)
- **Bar areas should remain closed, unless the area is utilized to accommodate seated tables** for in-restaurant dining
- **Live music should not be permitted unless appropriate precautions are taken.** Research and the CDC suggest that activities like singing may project respiratory droplets in greater quantity and over greater distance, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, particularly with prolonged exposure. Maintain at least 15 feet of separation—and more if possible—between audience members and

performers such as vocalists and singers. Adopt seating and spacing modifications to increase physical distance from a performer. Where necessary, install barriers to minimize travel of aerosolized particles from performers, or implement alternative placement of performers. In addition, maximize physical spacing between performers on-stage

- **Screen customers for illness** upon their entry into the restaurant:
 - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer in addition to screening questions. Customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise
 - Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days (Note: does not apply to healthcare workers equipped with proper PPE)?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

Seating Arrangement Specifications

- **Tables:** Tables should be spaced at least 6 feet apart
- **Booths:** Create at least 6 feet of separation between each booth. If booths are back- to-back and 6 feet of separation is not possible, install solid physical barriers (i.e. plexiglass, acrylic, wood, etc.) that rise from the back of the booth to at least 6 feet from the floor of the restaurant , so that there is a barrier reaching at least the level of the head between booths. Sanitize such barriers after each table turn
- **Counter seating:** If counter seating is used, maintain at least 6 feet between individual parties by spacing out moveable stools or chairs or reserving stationary stools and chairs. Evaluate modifications to maintain as much distance as reasonably possible between employees and customers utilizing counter seating
 - Best Practice: Install plexiglass, acrylic or similar physical barrier to separate and reduce exposure between employees and customers
- **Waiting areas:** Chairs or other seating in waiting areas should be spaced at least 6 feet apart. Standing-only space within waiting areas should remain clear; use outdoor waiting area or page customers in order to minimize congregation

Bars, Nightclubs and Limited Service

In addition to the other recommendations herein, the following guidelines also apply to bars, bar areas, night clubs, and limited service restaurants:

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 38:

“Bars, night clubs, and limited service restaurants, as defined in Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 57-4-102(22), may only serve customers seated at tables and must follow the Economic Recovery Group Guidelines (e.g., Tennessee Pledge) for restaurants in doing so, including appropriately spacing apart tables . . .; and further provided, that such establishments may offer drive-through, pickup, carry-out, or delivery service for food or drink, and persons are highly encouraged to use such drive-through, pickup, carry-out, or delivery options to support such businesses during this emergency.”

- **Establishments must only offer service to seated patrons** until further notice, with tables/parties separated by at least 6 feet apart to accommodate CDC social distancing guidelines. Modifications to the layout of the establishment may be necessary for appropriate spacing (physically moving tables or bar stools, marking stools or tables that are not available for use, installing plexiglass or other barrier at bar or counter, etc.). Establishments may need to operate at reduced capacity in order to achieve appropriate social distancing
- **Bar or counter service should not be provided** for walk-up customers. If bar or counter service is offered, customers must be seated at the bar or counter in accordance with these guidelines (see Seating Arrangement Specifications)
- **Common areas that facilitate standing-only congregation should remain closed** for the time being, unless utilized for tables. Consideration should be given to tables located near primary travel paths in order to avoid to the greatest extent possible persons repeatedly passing within 6 feet of a table (e.g. tables placed near a sidewalk or the pathway to a kitchen door, entryway, or restrooms)
- **Customers should note be seated at a bar or counter within 6 feet of where glassware is stored** or cleaned or where food preparation occurs
- Establishments should refer to and implement applicable safeguards from the ERG’s [Non-Contact Recreation Guidelines](#) for any on-premise game, arcade, or recreation areas

Business Process Adaptations

- **Mitigate exposure in the workplace** by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling
- **Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection** practices, according to CDC guidelines, with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours
- **Sanitize all front-of-house contact surfaces** including door handles, screens, phones, pens, keyboards and other areas of hand contact every two hours, at a minimum
- **Place hand sanitizer stations** in restaurant lobby and bathrooms, as well as at cashier stations
- **Use menus that are disposable or sanitized** between each use
- **Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins** (gloves should be used by staff while rolling silverware in designated sanitary areas)
- **Sanitize all tabletop items**, including condiments, after each table turns (or use disposables)
- **Sanitize chairs**, especially where contact occurs, after each table turns
- **Do not offer self-serve buffets**, condiments on a counter for use by multiple tables, or beverage station re-use