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## Guidelines

# Reopening of Food Establishments/Restaurants

### Objective

To provide recommended practices that can be used to help mitigate the exposure to the COVID-19 virus, including: food safety, cleaning and sanitizing, social distancing, employee health monitoring and personal hygiene.

### Rationale

COVID-19 pandemic has struck the world due to rapid human-to-human transmission. Preventive measures play an important role in limiting the spread of a disease and can help reducing the infection transmission and unnecessary burden on health care facilities. The guidelines provide practices that address specific health and safety concerns related to the spread of COVID-19, and to put protocols into practice for re-opening of food establishments.

### Instructions

Requirements of the food code that apply to coronavirus mitigation are:

- Prohibit sick employees in the workplace
- Ensure and follow strict handwashing practices
- Maintain social distancing
- Ensure practices regarding surface cleaning and disinfecting
- Ensure food safety manager is on site at all times during operating hours

Food establishments should consider the following measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19:

### EQUIPMENT AND PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

- Make sure utilities are working (for example; electrical, plumbing, and heating, ventilation/air conditioning, and fire suppression)
- Flush water system and all plumbed food equipment for a minimum of 5 minutes
- Equipment should be properly washed, rinsed and sanitized and pipes drained
- Assess and discard food that is no longer safe (e.g., expired or spoiled foods)
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all food contact surfaces
- Use single-use items as much as possible, such as packets of ketchup or salt.
- Thoroughly clean and repair all physical facilities including floors, walls, and ceilings
- Posters for preventive measures to be displayed at prominent places



## INDOOR DINING

- Indoor dining can reopen with groups of 10 or less and maintaining at least 3 feet distance among one group and 6 feet between two groups/tables.
- Indoor seating will be allowed at 50% capacity to maintain recommended social distancing guidelines.
- Ensure ventilation for indoor seating arrangement.

## OUTDOOR DINING

- Prefer outdoor dining at tables spaced at least 6 feet apart from other people.
- Tables must not block entrances, exits, pedestrian or handicapped access.
- Parking spaces may be used for dining tables, but there must be a physical barrier or separation to protect customers from vehicle traffic.
- Ensure outdoor dining areas are maintained and free of trash and other debris

## CUSTOMER PROTECTION

- Ensure thermal scanning of customers
- Use menus that are disposable or sanitized between each use.
- Clean and disinfect touched surfaces hourly.
- Maintain social distance of 6 feet in any entryway, hallway, or waiting area
- Ensure dining groups are seated at least 6 feet apart and remove or block extra seating
- Utilize contactless payment systems, or provide handwashing or hand gel for employees handling payment
- Maximize pick-up or delivery services
- Encourage the use of face mask when not eating

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 via employee health monitoring is critical and food establishments must consider how the following will be implemented:

- Train workers on symptoms of COVID-19 illness and on required hand hygiene
- Ensure thermal scanning of employees
- Encourage workers to stay home if they are sick.
- Ensure handwashing sinks are stocked with soap and paper towels and hand sanitizers are available
- Ensure use of face coverings by employees.
- Stagger work schedules as much as possible to reduce employee contact

Additionally, the following monitoring procedures must all be in place:

- Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of employees daily upon Arrival.
- Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home
- Plan for if an employee gets sick
- Monitor employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices



*Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international & national recommendations and best practices.*

*The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Ms Javeria Yousaf and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines.*

## References

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5. <https://www.palmbayflorida.org/government/city-departments-f-to-z/growth-management/land-development-planning/outdoor-dining-guidelines-during-covid-19>
6. <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/indoor-and-outdoor-dining/>

**For more information, please contact:**

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad

<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrco.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOOfficial>

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