





**INITIAL SUBJECT MATTER  
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*To hospitality operators getting ready to reopen...*

The purpose of guidance is just that – to offer you direction and provide a framework for best practices as you reopen.

But as the saying goes, the devil is in the details, and not every establishment is the same and not every opening scenario will align. We recognize that not everyone has access to guidance, and that is where the Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant, and Retailers Association (Alaska CHARR) can provide help.

- Make sure your person-in-charge has an up-to-date ServSafe Food Manager certification. The Food and Drug Administration requires every restaurant to have a person in charge on site during open hours and also directs that the person in charge should have a food manager certification.
- Provide ServSafe food handler training for your workers. They're your front line; educating them protects them, you, and your guests.
- Make technology your friend. Contactless payment systems, automated ordering systems, mobile ordering apps, website updates, and simple texts can help you to communicate and conduct business with reduced need for close contact. As you begin to reopen, keep communicating with customers (your hours, menu items, reservations, etc.), and help promote your social distancing and safety efforts.
- And some of the best advice comes from the Food and Drug Administration, which develops the Food Code we all rely on. Its newest guide, *Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic*, was just released. You can link to it [here](#).

As we continue to learn more about operating businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's important to share with you the most current direction and advice from the experts at FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies. These documents will continue to reflect those best practices and will continue to be updated.

## Returning hospitality to service **SAFELY**

Alaska CHARR is the Alaska partner of the National Restaurant Association, who worked with representatives of the Food and Drug Administration, academia, the Conference for Food Protection, Ecolab, public health officials, and industry representatives to develop a set of opening and operating guidelines to help establishments return to full operation safely when the time comes.

This guidance is designed to provide you with a basic summary of recommended practices that can be used to help mitigate exposure to the COVID-19 virus, including:

- Food safety
- Cleaning and sanitizing
- Employee health monitoring and personal hygiene
- Social distancing



Combine this guidance with your existing policies as well as this new resource from the FDA, *Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/ Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Armed with information, ServSafe training, and the recommendations of your local health departments, you can help secure a safe opening.

For the most comprehensive and up-to-date COVID-19 resources and information for Alaska's hospitality industry, visit:

[alaskacharr.com/coronavirus-and-hospitality](https://alaskacharr.com/coronavirus-and-hospitality)

## COVID-19 **HOSPITALITY RESPONSE**

Food safety has always been a priority for the hospitality industry, for both guests and employees.

The basis of an effective food safety culture is the Food and Drug Administration Food Code, which for decades has served as the foundation for restaurant operating procedures as they relate to safe food handling. The guidance outlined in the Food Code is science-based and is designed to reduce and prevent the incidence of foodborne illness. Food Code requirements related to sanitation and personal hygiene, in particular, are the most reliable protocols available to combat risks related to the spread of COVID-19.

Local, state and federal regulators use the FDA Food Code as a model to develop or update their own food safety rules and to be consistent with national food regulatory policy.

*Among the requirements of the Food Code that apply today are:*

- Prohibiting sick employees in the workplace
- Strict handwashing practices that include how and when to wash hands
- Strong procedures and practices to clean and sanitize surfaces
- Ensuring the person in charge of a foodservice facility is a certified food safety manager
- Ensuring the person in charge is on site at all times during operating hours

## Reopening guidance **FOR EMPLOYERS**

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE IS TO BUILD ON THE ALREADY ESTABLISHED BEST PRACTICES AND REQUIREMENTS AVAILABLE** that address specific health and safety concerns related to the spread of COVID-19, and to put those protocols into practice as state and local officials begin to open our communities and businesses. Operators should make use of these guidelines as they relate to their existing policies and procedures and in conjunction with instructions they receive from authorities during their reopening phase-in.

Local officials may tailor the application of opening criteria to local circumstances (eg: metropolitan areas that have seen more prevalent COVID-19 cases vs. rural areas where outbreaks have not occurred or have been minimal).

To prepare to comply with opening procedures, operators should update their existing policies and operating procedures in accordance with the latest FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

Operators must produce a written COVID-19 Mitigation Plan in accordance with current state and local health mandates. **EMPLOYERS MUST PROVIDE TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES REGARDING THE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE HEALTH MANDATES AND THE COVID-19 MITIGATION PLAN**, and have a copy of the written COVID-19 Mitigation Plan on the premises at all times.

*Among the required topics to be described in the written COVID-19 Mitigation Plan are:*

- Plans to minimize direct contact between employees and customers/groups, and to increase social/physical distancing
- Employee health and hygiene
- Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting

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## Reopening guidance **ON FOOD SAFETY**

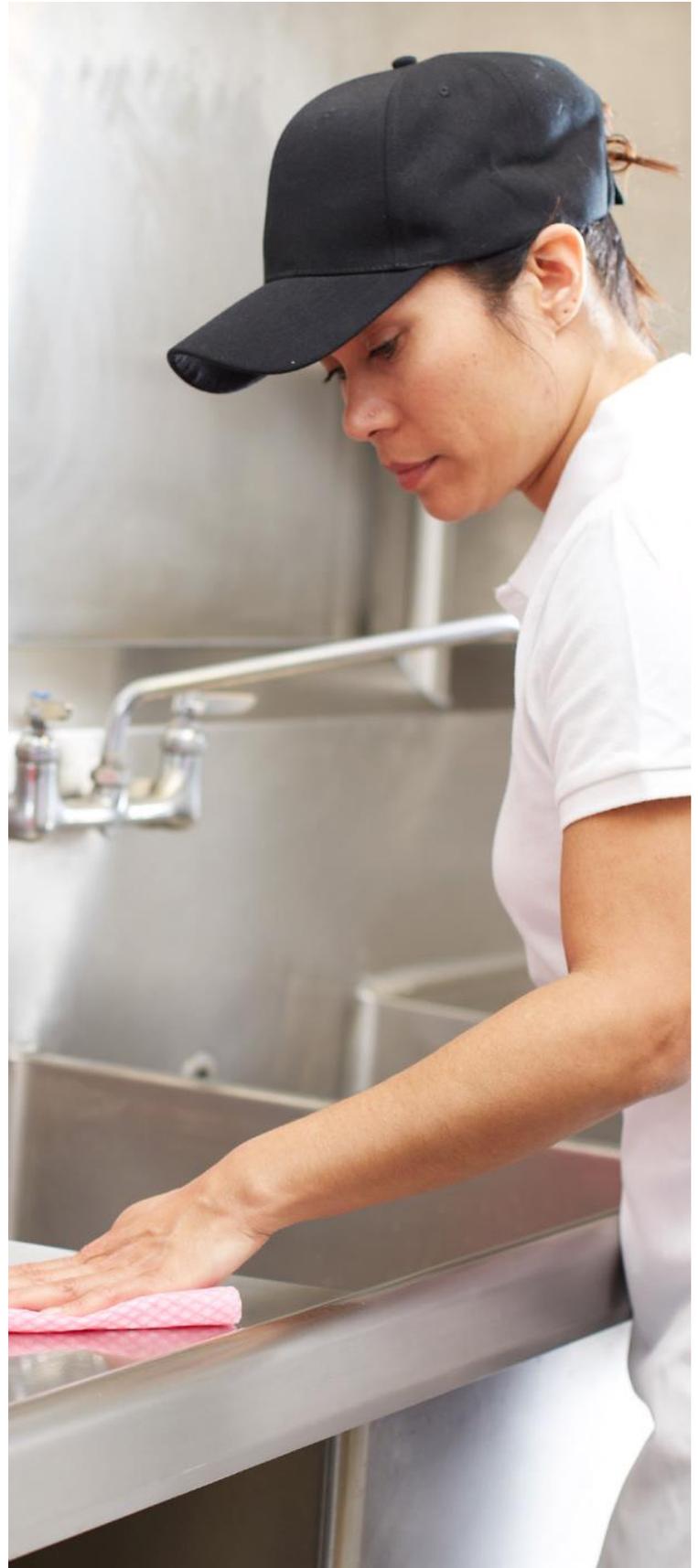
- Discard all food items that are out of date.
- Where salad bars and buffets are permitted by local officials, they should have sneeze guards in place. Change, wash and sanitize utensils frequently and place appropriate barriers in open areas. At this time, cafeteria style (worker-served) salad bars and buffets are the only types permissible.
- If providing a “grab and go” service, stock coolers to no more than minimum levels.
- Ensure the person in charge is ServSafe certified and that her/his certification is up to date; provide food handler training to refresh employees.



Reopening guidance for

## CLEANING & SANITIZING

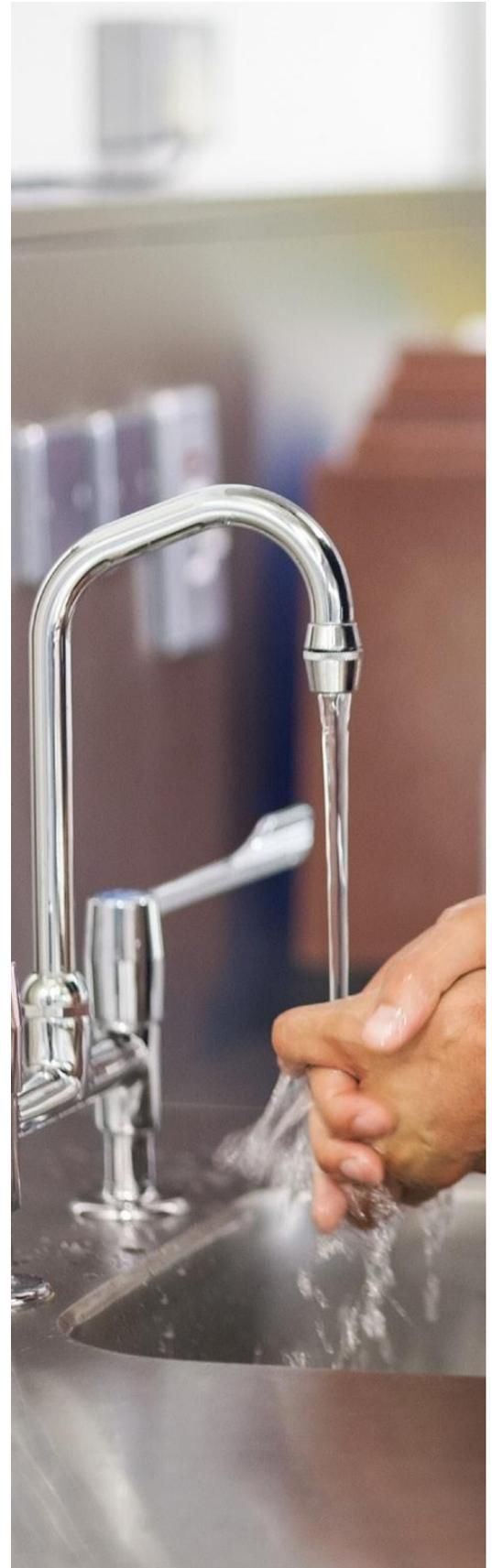
- Thoroughly detail-clean and sanitize the entire facility every week, in compliance with the [CDC protocols](#). Focus on high-contact areas that would be touched by both employees and guests. Do not overlook seldom-touched surfaces. Follow sanitizing material guidance to ensure effective sanitizing strength and to protect surfaces.
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants.
- Between seatings, fully clean and sanitize tables and chairs, bars and stools, reusable condiments, reusable digital ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops, and common touch areas. Single-use items should be discarded. Disposableware and condiments in single-use packages or single-serving containers should be used when available. Consider using rolled silverware and eliminating table presets. Reusable condiments may only be provided by request.
- Remove unwrapped straws from drink stations.
- Clean and sanitize reusable menus. Discard any paper menus after each customer use. Consider using menu boards. Implement procedures to increase how often you clean and sanitize surfaces in the back-of-house.
- Conduct hourly touch-point sanitization of high-contact areas (workstations, equipment, screens, doorknobs, restrooms).
- Make hand sanitizer and/or hand washing readily available to guests, including at the entrance. Consider touchless hand sanitizing solutions.



Reopening guidance on monitoring

## EMPLOYEE HEALTH & PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Per existing FDA Food Code requirements, employees who are sick should remain at home.
- If an employee becomes ill or presents signs of illness, the operator should identify the signs during a pre-work screening and follow the business's established policies on when the ill employee is allowed to return to work. At a minimum, however, follow [CDC guidelines](#). Suggest the employee contact a health care provider. The employee must be symptom-free before returning to work, and must not have a fever for three days without medication.
- Taking employees' temperatures is at the operators' discretion. The State has not mandated taking an employee's temperature, and any operator who chooses to do so should engage health officials first and adopt policies aligned with proper procedures. CDC guidance states the minimum temperature that indicates a fever is 100°F.
- The State strongly suggests cloth face coverings to be worn by all employees who are interacting with the public. Per CDC recommendations, face coverings have been shown to be effective tools to mitigate risk from individuals who show symptoms as well as those who don't, especially in close environments where it's hard for people to maintain a three- to six-foot distance. Those coverings worn by employees should be kept clean in accordance with CDC guidance. CDC provides overall cleaning guidance [here](#).
- Train all employees on the importance of frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers with at least 70% alcohol content. Give them clear instruction to avoid touching hands to face.
- An adequate supply of soap, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and paper towels must be available.

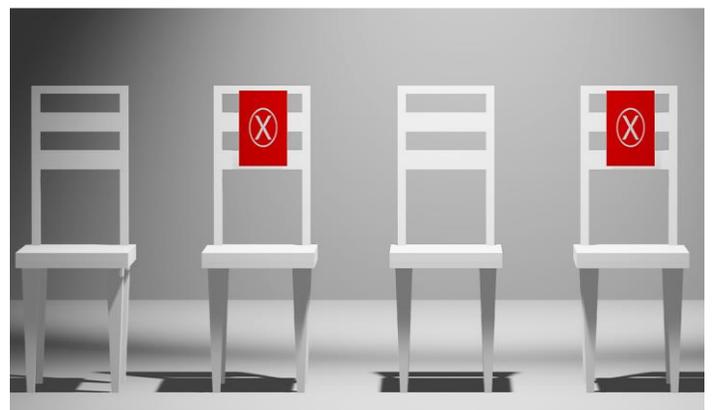


Reopening guidance on

# SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Update floor plans for common dining areas, redesigning seating arrangements to ensure adequate separation between table setups as mandated for the space. Limit parties to only individuals who reside in the same household (including roommates and non-familial household members). Walk-ins are permitted as long as a customer log is kept.
- Any social distancing measures based on square footage should take into account service areas as well as guest areas.
- Remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers that you have internal distancing requirements.
- Post signage at the entrance that states that no one with symptoms of COVID-19 is to be permitted on the premises.
- Limit contact between waitstaff and guests.
- If practical, physical barriers such as partitions or Plexiglas barriers at registers are acceptable.
- Limit the number of employees allowed simultaneously in break rooms.
- Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction: mobile ordering and menu tablets; text on arrival for seating; contactless payment options.
- With larger staffs, use communication boards or digital messaging to convey pre-shift meeting information.
- Provide hand sanitizer for guests to use, including contactless hand sanitizing stations, and post signs reminding guests about social distancing. Thank them for their patience as you work to ensure their safety.
- Do not allow guests to congregate in waiting areas or bar areas. Design a process to ensure guests stay separate while waiting to be seated. The process can include floor markings, outdoor distancing, waiting in cars, etc. Consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance. Determine ingress/egress to and from restrooms to establish paths that mitigate proximity for guests and staff.
- Where possible, workstations should be staggered so employees avoid standing directly opposite one another or next to each other. Where six feet of separation is not possible, consider other options and increase the frequency of surface cleaning and sanitizing.
 

*Note: When worn, face coverings should be cleaned daily according to CDC guidance. The operator should consider collecting and cleaning all face coverings from staff at the end of each day and redistributing at the beginning of each shift; alternatively, enforce mandatory daily washing by staff.*



Reopening guidance on

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS & RESTRICTIONS

- Develop a written COVID-19 Mitigation Plan using the corresponding checklist. A printed copy of the Plan must be kept on the premises at all times. Train all employees on the material within the Plan. Provide a printed copy of the Plan to each employee, and have each employee certify in writing that she/he has received a written copy of the Plan and understands the material within.
- Screen each employee before she/he begins each shift for symptoms of COVID-19. Document each screening on the accompanying spreadsheet, have the employee certify whether she/he displays any symptoms of COVID-19. Employees displaying any symptoms must immediately leave the premises and should contact a health care professional. Employee screening logs must be kept confidential and should remain in the appropriate employee's personnel file. Records should be retained for two years for employer protection.
- If an active employee is identified as being COVID-19 positive by testing, you must conduct cleaning and disinfecting in compliance with [CDC guidelines](#), or shut down the business for at least 72 consecutive hours.
- Tables for different household parties must be spaced as required (see corresponding checklist).
- Indoor capacity (including all on-duty staff and customers) is limited to 25% of the maximum occupancy in bars, and 50% in restaurants. Operators must enforce the capacity limits.
- Outdoor seating is limited to 20 tables maximum.
- Customers from different households who are seated at the bar must be at least six feet apart.
- No communal food is allowed among customers from different households.
- A reservation/guest log must be maintained to include the date, first and last name of at least one member in each party, and a phone number for the party. The number of guests for each party should also be documented to help track occupancy. Logs should be kept for at least 30 days, or for a recommended two years for employer protection. Staff should ask or remind all members in the party that they must all be from the same household, either at the time the reservation is made and/or before the party is seated at a table.
- On-premises alcohol service may be provided to diners, if permitted with a corresponding license issued by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- The accompanying signage (or similar that meets all requirements) must be posted: 1) entryway signage stating that any customer who has symptoms of COVID-19 must not enter the premises; and 2) signage stating the limited maximum capacity based on the above requirements.

### Additional Recommendations

- It is strongly encouraged that cloth face coverings be worn by all employees who are interacting with the public or regularly working within six feet of others.
- Continue to prioritize entryway, curbside, and home delivery, as well as telephone and online ordering to minimize contact during pickup and delivery.
- Utilize paperless transactions when possible and offer to email receipts. Encourage customers to use cards or other cashless payment options.
- Where possible, utilize different entry and exit points using one-way traffic.
- Implement additional safety and sanitization house policies.

# BEST PRACTICES

for retail food stores, restaurants, and pick-up/delivery services during the COVID-19 pandemic

FDA is sharing information about best practices to operate restaurants, retail food stores, and associated pick-up and delivery services during the COVID-19 pandemic to safeguard workers and consumers. This addresses key considerations for how foods offered can be safely handled and delivered to the public. This is not a comprehensive list. FDA encourages consulting the references and links provided below (by CDC, FDA, EPA, and OSHA) for more detailed information. This will be updated as FDA receives additional information.

- [Managing Employee Health \(Including Contracted Workers\)](#)
- [Personal Hygiene for Employees](#)
- [Managing Operations in a Foodservice Establishment or Retail Store](#)
- [Managing Food Pick-up and Delivery](#)

## Be Healthy, Be Clean



- Employees - Stay home or leave work if sick; consult doctor if sick, and contact supervisor
- Employers - Instruct sick employees to stay home and send home immediately if sick
- Employers - Pre-screen employees exposed to COVID-19 for temperature and other symptoms



- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer per CDC
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Wear mask/face covering per CDC & FDA



- Never touch Ready-to-Eat foods with bare hands
- Use single service gloves, deli tissue, or suitable utensils
- Wrap food containers to prevent cross contamination
- Follow 4 steps to food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill

## Clean & Disinfect



- Train employees on cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and protective measures, per CDC and FDA
- Have and use cleaning products and supplies
- Follow protective measures



- Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently
- Use EPA-registered disinfectant
- Ensure food containers and utensils are cleaned and sanitized



- Prepare and use sanitizers according to label instructions
- Offer sanitizers and wipes to customers to clean grocery cart/basket handles, or utilize store personnel to conduct cleaning/sanitizing

## Social Distance



- Help educate employees and customers on importance of social distancing:
  - Signs
  - Audio messages
  - Consider using every other check-out lane to aid in distancing



- Avoid displays that may result in customer gatherings; discontinue self-serve buffets and salad bars; discourage employee gatherings
- Place floor markings and signs to encourage social distancing



- Shorten customer time in store by encouraging them to:
  - Use shopping lists
  - Order ahead of time, if offered
- Set up designated pick-up areas inside or outside retail establishments

## Pick-up & Delivery



- If offering delivery options:
  - Ensure coolers and transport containers are cleaned and sanitized
  - Maintain time and temperature controls
  - Avoid cross contamination; for example, wrap food during transport



- Encourage customers to use "no touch" deliveries
- Notify customers as the delivery is arriving by text message or phone call



- Establish designated pick-up zones for customers
- Offer curb-side pick-up
- Practice social distancing by offering to place orders in vehicle trunks



Alaska Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant, and Retailers Association

# COVID-19 Reopening Guidance

*A Guide for the Hospitality Industry*

Phase 2

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[alaskacharr.com/coronavirus-and-hospitality](https://alaskacharr.com/coronavirus-and-hospitality)

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