

Guidance for Food Service Reopening

Purpose

On April 23, 2020, Governor Brad Little issued the *Idaho Rebounds* plan to reopen Idaho after COVID-19. It is a four-phased program to slowly reopen businesses and services that had been closed by state orders. Phase Two addresses the reopening of restaurant dining rooms, which may take effect as early as May 16, 2020, provided necessary criteria are met during Phase One; all stages are subject to be modified or extended. The following guidance provides recommendations for food service establishments that wish to resume their operations and/or reopen their dining areas for service to customers. You are encouraged to use this guidance to build a plan that will help provide a safer environment for patrons and staff amidst COVID-19.

Recommended Actions

Food Safety

- Follow and maintain food-safety practices as carefully as the COVID-19 safety protocols.
- Discard all out-of-date food items.
- Apply procedures that ensure:
 - Cooked foods reach the proper internal temperatures prior to service or cooling.
 - Hot foods are cooled rapidly for later use – check temperatures of foods being cooled in refrigerators or by rapid cooling techniques such as ice baths and cooling wands.
 - The time foods being stored, displayed, or delivered are held in the danger zone (between 41°F and 135°F) is minimized.
 - Proper training for food employees with new or altered duties and that they apply the training according to established procedures.
- Apply measures to prevent cross contamination:
 - Use separate equipment. Each type of food should be prepped and handled with a separate piece of equipment.
 - All work surfaces, equipment and utensils should be cleaned and sanitized after each task.
 - Follow proper stacking order of foods in coolers and freezers.
 - Implement personal hygiene program and remind employees to wash their hands.
 - Ensure “No Bare Hand” contact with ready to eat foods.
- If providing “grab-and-go” service, stock coolers to no more than minimum levels (i.e. do not overstock coolers)
- Ensure that any wrapping and packaging used for food transport is done so that contamination of food is prevented.
- Ensure the person in charge at your establishment is a Certified Food Protection Manager and that his or her certification is up to date. Provide food-handler training to refresh employees.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Thoroughly detail, clean, and sanitize entire facility, especially if it has been closed. Establishments should frequently clean and disinfect door handles, surfaces of doors that people may touch to open or close the door, handrails, countertops, and other high touch surfaces.
 - Between seating of customers, clean and sanitize table condiments, digital ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops, and common touch areas. Single-use items should be discarded. Consider using rolled silverware and eliminating table presets.
 - Clean and sanitize reusable menus. If you use paper menus, discard them after each customer use or discontinue.
 - Do not overlook seldom-touched surfaces.
- A list of recommended EPA registered disinfectants to use can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Verify that your ware-washing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
- Remember that hot water can be used in place of chemicals to sanitize equipment and utensils in manual ware-washing machines.
- In the absence of ware-washing machine use your three compartment sink and follow the four - step method to clean and sanitize utensils and ware.
- Routinely clean and sanitize coolers and insulated bags used to deliver foods.
- Routinely clean and disinfect delivery vehicle.
- Implement procedures to increase how often you clean and sanitize surfaces in the back-of-house.
- Check restrooms regularly, and clean and sanitize them based on frequency of use.
- Sanitize any handle of a “grab and go” case after each patron touches it.
- Consider making hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes available to customers at the entrance of the facility. Consider touchless sanitizer dispensers to reduce any contamination on the dispenser.

Employee Health Monitoring and Personal Hygiene

- It is important to do a pre-check to make sure employees are healthy as they report to work. If an employee becomes ill or presents signs of illness, identify the signs during a pre-work screening and send them home. Follow your business’s established policies on when the ill employee can return to work. At a minimum, follow [CDC guidelines](#); tell the employee to self-isolate for seven days from the onset of symptoms, and be symptom-free for three days without medication.
- Managers need to be extra diligent in communicating with staff and monitoring staff closely to ensure that employees:
 - Wash hands frequently and whenever required by the Idaho Food Code - Ensure that the handwashing policy is posted in a place every employee can easily review it as needed.

- Always keep all hand washing sinks stocked with soap, paper towels, and an adequate supply of warm water.
 - Wear gloves when handling ready to eat foods.
 - Avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth - Stay home if showing or reporting any signs or symptoms of illness.
 - Wear clean clothing, not the same uniform from the day before. If their uniform or clothing gets heavily soiled or is in contact with raw meat, a replacement uniform should be provided.
- Employees that are processing payment transactions and also handing bags/containers of food to customers should wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer between customers. If glove use is chosen as a preventive measure, an employee must wash hands before donning a fresh pair of gloves.

Social Distancing and Other Safety Measures

- Ensure that your employees are practicing physical distancing measures as much as possible.
- Implement social distancing protocols for customers waiting in line inside or outside the facility. A minimum distance of 6 feet between customers must be maintained at all times.
 - A practical method of doing this would be to place tape on the floor to act as markers for where customers should stand to ensure social distancing.
 - Staff need to monitor and guide customers accordingly.
 - Consider removing seats to better facilitate social distancing between seated customers.
 - Update floor plans for common dining areas, redesigning seating arrangements to ensure at least six feet of separation between table setups.
- Physical barriers are acceptable where practical, especially in booth seating.
- Consider a reservations-only or call-ahead-seating business model to better space diners.
- Remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers that you have internal distancing requirements.
- Limit contact between wait staff and guests.
- If practical, physical barriers such as partitions or Plexiglas at registers are acceptable.
- Self-service beverage operations, such as a soda fountain, should be discontinued. Cups may be filled by employees. Single use items such as napkins, plastic ware, and condiments should not be provided in a self-service area. These items should be provided to customers by staff.
- During transaction, have the customer insert their chip card/swipe their credit card into the payment device themselves to minimize contact with items from others. If a signature is required on a credit card slip, sanitize the pen that was used by the customer.
- Use technology where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, including mobile ordering, menu tablets, texts on arrival for seating, and contactless payment.
- If your establishment has a customer self-service salad bar, either discontinue the use of it for the time being or have an employee supervise the use of it/construct the salads for the patrons. Ensure that there are adequate sneeze guards in place and all of the utensils are removed properly cleaned and sanitized frequently. Allow for enough space in the salad bar area so customers may practice good social distancing while in line.

- Discard paper menus after each customer use or discontinue paper menus entirely.
- Encourage patrons to wash hands thoroughly and frequently while in the establishment. Make hand sanitizer available.
- Determine ingress/egress to and from restrooms to establish paths that allow for physical spacing of guests and staff.
- Consider an exit from the facility separate from the entrance.
- Employers should follow local and state requirements when it comes to face coverings, which the CDC recommends as an effective tool to mitigate risk from individuals who show COVID-19 symptoms. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

Communication

- Place posters or signage at the entrance to your establishment and in high visibility areas that encourages patrons to:
 - Not enter the facility if they are feeling ill.
 - Utilize cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene.
 - Practice social distancing.
- Determine how you will relay information about your operations to employees, patrons, and business partners.
- Decide how will you keep your employees, patrons, and business partners informed about the latest public health recommendations and your response.

This guidance is subject to change as more information becomes available about limiting the transmission of COVID-19. For more information on COVID-19, additional resources are available at the following links:

- CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Print Resources:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>

CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

- CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- National Restaurant News - National Restaurant Association releases coronavirus reopening guide for industry:
 - <https://www.nrn.com/operations/national-restaurant-association-releases-coronavirus-reopening-guide-industry>
- State of Idaho Official Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website:
 - <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>
- Central District Health COVID-19 Resources:
 - <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus>

- <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus-resources>
- Central District Health Call Center: 208-321-2222, M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm