

Phase One Requirements and Best Practices for Food Establishments

The Richmond City and Henrico County Health Districts are providing the following information regarding Phase One for food establishments in Virginia.

Mandatory requirements:

Businesses must strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines, enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices, and enhanced workplace safety practices provided in the [Guidelines for All Business Sectors](#) document.

Virginia Department of Health and Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services regulated facilities must continue to follow requirements related to prohibiting sick employees in the workplace, strict handwashing practices, and procedures and practices to clean and sanitize surfaces.

During Phase I, businesses should continue to offer takeout and delivery options. If businesses choose to open to dine-in customers, they may only do so in outdoor spaces and must adhere to the following additional requirements for outdoor service:

- Occupancy must be limited to no more than 50% of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy, if applicable, while maintaining a minimum of six feet of physical distancing between all individuals as much as possible.

- Post signage at the entrance that states that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or known exposure to a COVID-19 case in the prior 14 days, is permitted in the establishment.
- Post signage to provide public health reminders regarding physical distancing, gatherings, options for [high risk individuals](#), and staying home if sick.
- Provide a minimum of six feet between parties at tables, (i.e., the six feet cannot include the space taken up by the seated guest). If tables are not movable, seat parties at least six feet apart. Spacing must also allow for physical distancing from areas outside of the facility's control (i.e. provide physical distancing from persons on public sidewalks).
- Do not seat parties of more than 10 patrons. All parties, whether seated together or across multiple tables, must be limited to 10 patrons or less.
- Do not seat multiple parties at any one table unless marked with six foot divisions (such as with tape).
- Bar seats and congregating areas of restaurants must be closed to patrons except for through-traffic. Non-bar seating in the outdoor bar area (i.e., tables or counter seats that do not line up to a bar or food service area) may be used for customer seating as long as a minimum of six feet is provided between parties at tables.
- Keep game areas, dance floors, and playgrounds closed. If live musicians are performing at an establishment, they must remain at least six feet from patrons and staff.
- Employees working in customer dining and service areas are required to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth, such as using [CDC Use of Cloth Face Coverings guidance](#).



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- Use single-use disposable menus (e.g., paper) and discard after each customer. Reusable menus are not permitted in Phase I. Refilling food and beverage containers or implements brought in by customers is not allowed in Phase I.
- Prior to each shift, employers should ask that the employee self-measure their temperature and assess symptoms. Please see [VDH Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers During Widespread Community Transmission](#).
- No self-service of food (except beverages), including condiments. Condiments must be removed from tables and dispensed by employees upon the request of a customer. Buffets must be staffed by servers. For self-service beverage areas, use beverage equipment designed to dispense by a contamination-free method.
- Perform thorough cleaning and disinfection of frequently contacted surfaces including digital ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops, bathroom surfaces, and other common touch areas every 60 minutes during operation. Tabletops and credit card/bill folders must be disinfected between patrons.
- Table resets must be done by an employee who has washed their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds just prior to reset activities.
- Only 10 patrons may wait for takeout in the lobby area at one time.
- Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, including mobile ordering and menu tablets, text on arrival for seating, and contactless payment options.
- Consider methods to make point of sale terminals safer, including use of no contact applications, placement of a glass or clear plastic barrier between the employee and the customer, and providing a hand sanitizer station for customer and employee use after handling credit/debit cards, PIN terminals, or exchange of cash.
- Servers should avoid touching items on tables while customers are seated. Dedicated staff should remove all items from the table when customer(s) leave.
- Consider scheduled closure periods throughout the day to allow for cleaning and disinfecting, including bathrooms (i.e., after lunch service).
- Use separate doors to enter and exit the establishment when possible.
- When protective equipment such as face coverings are used, launder daily and wash hands after touching/adjusting face covering while working.
- Single-use items should be discarded. Consider using rolled silverware and eliminating table presets.
- Consider installing touchless door and sink systems or providing single-use barriers (e.g., deli tissues, paper towels) for use when touching door and sink handles.
- Implement procedures to increase how often the back-of-house areas are cleaned and sanitized.

Best Practices:

In addition to the requirements provided above, establishments are encouraged to utilize the following best practices to the extent they are feasible:

- Encourage customers to wear face coverings while entering, exiting, or otherwise traveling throughout the restaurant. Face coverings may be removed while seated.
- Utilize reservations for dining on the premises.
- Use staff facilitated seating where appropriate. If seating is not staff facilitated and tables cannot be moved to meet the physical distancing requirements outlined above, tables that should not be used must be clearly marked that they are out of service.
- Assign employee(s) to monitor and clean high touch areas while in operation.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Coronavirus Hotline (804) 205-3501 is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Our Websites are updated regularly with reliable data and resources:

- www.vdh.virginia.gov.
- www.rchd.com
- henrico.us/healthvdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus