

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Guideline for Food Service Establishments

May 9, 2020

Phase 2 of Restart BC which includes dine-in food and beverage service is not yet in effect

Operators may use this document to plan for Phase 2 anticipated in mid-May

KEY POINTS



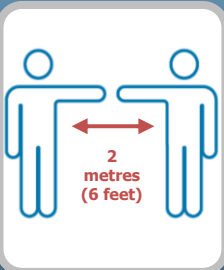
Stay HOME if you are sick

The most important measure to prevent spread of COVID-19 is to stay home if you are sick.



WASH your hands

Good personal hygiene helps reduce the risk of infection: cough/sneeze etiquette, avoid touching your face & hand washing.



Keep your DISTANCE

Prevent transmission through droplets by creating space between people, stay two metres (six feet) apart.



CLEAN surfaces often

Regular disinfection of high-touch areas reduces the risk of transmission from contaminated surfaces.

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Under Phase 2 of British Columbia's Restart Plan, dine-in service is able to resume under enhanced protocols. Food Service Establishment operators can use this guideline to prepare their reopening plan until further direction is given from the Provincial Health Officer. The COVID-19 pandemic continues and in the absence of a vaccine there is a continued need to ensure essential hygienic practices and cleaning processes are followed.

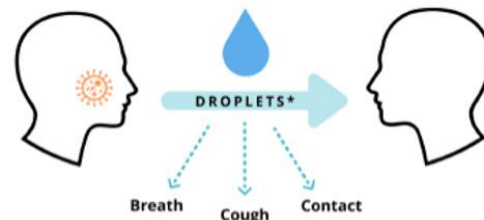
This document provides guidance for preventing transmission of COVID-19 to operators and customers of food service establishments. It is based upon current knowledge and it should be understood that the guidance is subject to change as new data becomes available and developments arise with this new virus; furthermore, unique situations may require some discretion in adjusting these guidelines which are meant to be supportive, not prescriptive. All [BC Food Premises Regulation](#) requirements remain unchanged and in place.

WHAT is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by a newly identified virus. The infection has symptoms similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold: cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms can include fatigue, muscle aches, diarrhea, headache or lost sense of smell. While most people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, severe illness can occur in some people, especially in the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions.

HOW COVID-19 Spreads

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed. COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.



[VIDEO: Transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus](#)

WHERE can I get more Information about COVID-19?

The province of British Columbia has created a phone service to provide non-medical information about COVID-19 which is available from 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) or via text message at 604-630-0300.

More information on COVID-19 can also be found online:

- Vancouver Coastal Health <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19>
- BC Centre for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

How to use this Guideline:

This guideline contains a number of potential actions for reducing the risks of transmission for food service establishments. Each business must assess their own risks such that the appropriate combination of measures can be implemented.

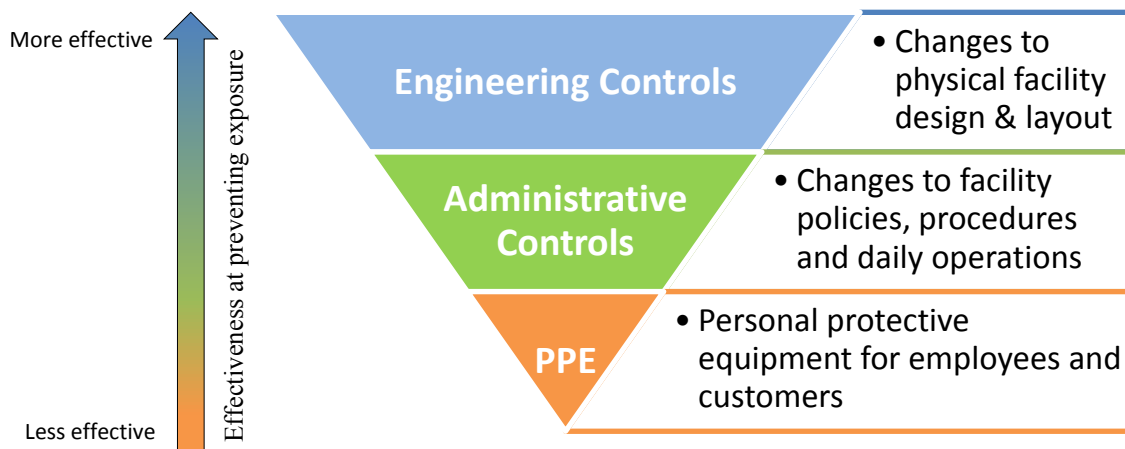
In all cases, it remains important for everyone to stay home if you are sick, to wash your hands often, to keep your distance, and to disinfect high touch surfaces often.

Prioritizing Action

It may be helpful to understand the rationale behind the recommendations in this guideline, and the relative impacts each can have on controlling the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace. Some controls will be more difficult to implement but may have a greater overall impact, while other controls will be easier to implement but may have less overall impact.

Levels of Control

In the model shown below, control methods at the top of the pyramid are generally more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following this model normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness exposure and/or transmission has been substantially reduced.



Typically, engineering controls are favored over administrative and personal protective equipment (PPE) for controlling exposures. This is because most engineering controls are designed to prevent people from coming into contact with an infectious person or contaminated surface in the first place.

Information in this Guideline will be presented as a Series of Tip Sheets:

- Employee Sickness
- Personal Hygiene
- Physical Distancing
- Sanitation
- Site Management
- Signage & Communication
- Staff Scheduling & Meetings

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Tip Sheet – Employee Sickness

Goal: To maintain a healthy workforce by ensuring employees stay home if they are ill.

Administrative Controls

- Thoughtfully plan your sick-leave policy to create an environment where employees feel supported in staying home when they are sick.
- Have ready operational contingency plans in cases where employees must remain home when sick (e.g. modifying systems to operate with fewer employees).
- Develop an employee illness plan that is communicated to all staff.
- Have employees declare they are symptom-free when signing in for the day.
- Tell your employees that if they are sick with any symptoms consistent with cold, influenza or COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, they must not work, remain at home, and contact Health Link BC at 8-1-1.
- If while at work, an employee starts experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, ask the employee to don a mask and to leave work immediately, go straight home, and have them contact their family physician/primary care provider or 8-1-1 for further guidance.
- Ensure that objects and surfaces touched by sick employees who have gone home are disinfected before being used by others.
- Sick employees should use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- Anyone with symptoms can now be assessed and receive a COVID-19 test.
- Testing is not recommended for people who do not have symptoms.
- If an employee has a COVID-19 diagnosis, the local public health department will identify any co-workers who may have been exposed to the sick employee.
- The employer and employees should be reassured that if they haven't been contacted by public health then there is no issue or concern that was identified by public health.

Resources:

- [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Poster: COVID-19 Testing for all who Need It](#)

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Tip Sheet – Personal Hygiene

GOAL: To limit spread of the virus by promoting good personal hygiene through hand washing, hand sanitization, and cough/sneeze etiquette.

Engineering Controls

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entrances and posters reminding of the importance of handwashing/sanitizing following contact with common touch surfaces.
- Washrooms and dedicated hand washing sinks must have liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water at all times.

Administrative Controls

- Educate employees about the virus so they know how to minimize its spread.
- Consider providing electronic COVID-19 resources to all employees, such as those included in this document.
- Employees should be reminded to practice good hygiene throughout their shift.
- Employees must avoid touching their face without first cleaning their hands.
- Replace physical greetings such as handshakes and hugs with non-contact greetings.
- There should be no sharing of cigarettes or vaping equipment.

Personal Protective Equipment

Frequent, and proper hand washing is encouraged as the best way of preventing all viral respiratory infections and other foodborne illnesses.

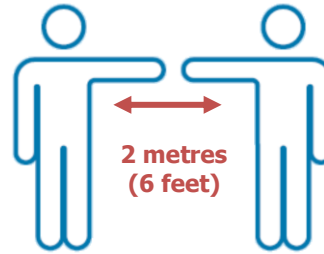
- Service employees and food handlers are not required to wear gloves and/or masks unless they are normally used to perform job duties.
- If gloves are used, they must be taken off correctly, hands must be washed between uses, and they must be changed when switching tasks.
- Service employees and food handlers may choose to wear non-medical masks.
- If masks are used, employees should be aware that masks can become contaminated on the outside when touched by hands.
- Avoid touching or adjusting masks often, and do not share them with others.

Resources:

- [Video: Hand Washing](#)
- [Video: Cough & sneeze etiquette](#)
- [Video: How to remove disposable gloves](#)

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Tip Sheet – Physical Distancing

Goal: To modify the physical environment and increase space between people to eliminate transmission of the virus through respiratory droplets.

Engineering Controls

- Increase empty floor space by removing unnecessary materials, equipment, and merchandise displays, especially in foyers, high traffic areas, and other small spaces.
- Mark 2 metre (6 foot) increments on floors where crowds normally form (e.g. line-up areas inside and outside the restaurant, payment areas etc.).
- Moveable tables shall be arranged so the distance from the back of one chair to the back of another chair is at least 2 metres (6 feet).
- If distancing cannot be created between dining chairs and/or tables, reduce overall seating capacity.
- As a last resort, it may be acceptable to install physical barriers between tables.
- A physical barrier should be installed at bars between patrons and staff, or bar seating should be closed.
- For booth seating, partitions between booths can be raised, or seating could be limited to every other booth.
- Fixed banquet/multi-party tables may need to be modified to allow for spacing so patrons in different parties can maintain proper physical distancing.
- Employees should work more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart.
- As a last resort, where physical distancing requirements cannot be achieved between work stations, it may be acceptable to install plastic shields (e.g. plexi-glass).
- If possible, increase the amount of outdoor air being brought in, and/or natural ventilation. Open windows and doors, where possible.

Administrative Controls

- Consider extending operating hours to minimize the number of clients at one time.
- Monitor the number of customers in the restaurant to maintain physical distancing.
- Develop a clear policy for receiving deliveries and other supplies that ensures reduced contact between people.

Resources:

- Video: [Why do we need to socially distance?](#)

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Tip Sheet – Sanitation

Goal: Increase cleaning and disinfection of common high touch points to prevent COVID-19 from spreading through contaminated surfaces.

Most disinfectants typically used in food service establishments are sufficient to kill COVID-19 as long as manufacturer's instructions are followed; special products are not necessary. In general:

- Disinfectants will have a DIN (drug identification number) and clear set of instructions.
- Make sure the appropriate contact time is met (i.e. surfaces must remain wet with disinfectant for the correct length of time in order to destroy any contamination).
- Surfaces that are dirty must be cleaned with soap and water first, before disinfecting.

Engineering Controls

- Keep separate cleaning supplies for front of house and back of house areas.
- Provide multiple plastic lined waste containers to dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials.

Administrative Controls

- In addition to following your regular cleaning activities, create a checklist of high-touch surfaces that must be cleaned and sanitized more frequently throughout the day.
- Examples include: door handles, light switches, debit machines, counters, coat racks, break room appliances, railings, trollies, faucets, menus, and condiments etc.
- Choose appropriate methods to disinfect all surfaces on the checklist.
- Post daily disinfection schedules in high-visibility areas.
- Assign team members specific disinfection responsibilities, and have them sign off.
- Make sure any person required to clean has received the appropriate training.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Ensure employees responsible for cleaning are equipped with any required personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, goggles, apron and mask).
- Employees who are washing dishes should wear a mask and eye protection.

Resources:

- [Health Canada approved disinfectants for COVID-19](#)
- [BCCDC Guideline for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

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TIP Sheet – Site Management

Goal: To modify normal business operations to minimize the potential for COVID-19 to spread in food service establishments.

Engineering Controls

- Install protective shields at customer service and point of sale areas.
- Eliminate communal storage areas for employees' personal belongings, and instead provide separate sealable bins or lockers.

Administrative Controls

- Do not operate buffets, salad bars, beverage stations, or any other self-service areas.
- Only offer bulk foods if they are safely dispensed by staff.
- If a table is not immediately available, instead of having clients wait in the lobby, consider sending them off site and using electronic notification when their table is ready (e.g. recommend text messages instead of common-touch pagers).
- Encourage customers to book reservations as much as possible.
- Consider temporarily suspending any valet parking or coat check services.
- Encourage dining patrons to use outdoor seating as much as possible.
- Keep all dining room tables clear of utensils, menu boards and shared condiment containers and provide only those needed by customers.
- Consider using single-use condiments and replacing re-usable menus with single-use menus or touchless menu options (e.g. online menus, sandwich board displays etc.).
- Consider allowing children to keep coloring crayons, rather than re-using.
- Continue offering delivery or take-out services as an alternative to dine-in options.
- Provide “drop at the door service” for delivery, to avoid close contact with individuals who may be in isolation or who are symptomatic.
- Encourage use of touch-free payment options. When cash is the only payment option, staff must avoid touching their eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.
- Only essential personnel required to run the business must be allowed in the kitchen.
- Provide designated uniforms that are laundered by a service, or encourage workers to wear clothes that can be washed frequently.
- Consider postponing large projects (e.g. renovations) that would require additional people to be on site (e.g. engineers, architects, consultants, contractors etc.).

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TIP Sheet – Staff Scheduling & Meetings

Goal: To adjust schedules, rotations and shift activities to limit contact between team members.

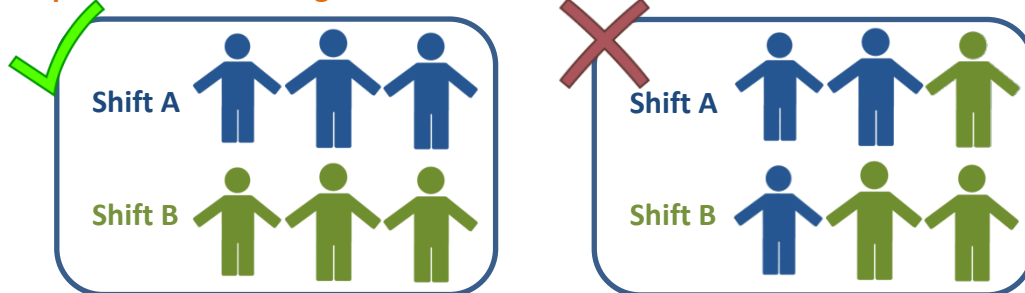
Engineering Controls

- If possible, designate additional rooms or areas for breaks, and encourage use of outdoor spaces.
- Use large rooms, outdoor spaces, or virtual options for team meetings.
- Clearly demarcate employee-only areas and do not allow clients to enter these spaces.

Administrative Controls

- Team members who can work from home should do so.
- When multiple team members are onsite at any given time, keep individuals in the same location as much as possible.
- Consider implementing ‘cohort staffing’ – this means forming small groups of team members who will consistently work together without crossover.

Example of cohort staffing:



- If your company owns multiple restaurant outlets, identify team members who work at multiple outlets and find a way to eliminate or reduce travel between sites.
- Have team members or a manager keep daily records of the people who worked together and retain these records for at least two months.
- Stagger breaks for individuals or cohorts, and maintain a predictable break schedule.
- Staff training should be done in small groups with social distancing, or online.
- If prep shifts are scheduled, consider staggering start times so there is no overlap with service shifts to minimize the number of employees on site at one time.

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Tip Sheet – Signage & Communications

GOAL: To communicate important information and provide instructions in a way that is easily understood by everyone.

Engineering Controls

- Place signs on front doors to tell anyone entering not to enter if they are feeling ill.
- Post physical distancing signs in common areas.
- Place posters near to all bathroom and kitchen sinks, reminding users of good hand washing practice.

Administrative Controls

- Maintain up-to-date and consistent messaging on websites, in social media, emails, press releases, and during conversations with customers to ensure all details are aligned, timely and accurate.
- Communicate information in multiple languages.
- Wherever possible, use diagrams and pictures to communicate information.
- Ensure the font size on signage is large enough for everyone to read from a distance (i.e. if the person was standing 6 feet away from the sign).
- In wet areas and outdoors, put posters in plastic sleeves to protect them from water damage.
- Any important signage should be placed in conspicuous areas, and away from other posted information so it is clearly visible and distinguishable (i.e. avoid posting signs next to product advertisements, coupon boards etc.).
- Encourage team members to provide regular feedback on any issues with COVID-19 prevention measures. Consider providing a means for employees to do this anonymously.

Resources:

- Poster: [Physical Distancing](#)
- Poster: [Do Not Enter when Sick](#)
- Poster: [Hand Washing Poster](#)