

Guidelines for Hotel, Gaming, and Food Service Facilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The following guidelines reflect direction from public health experts, hospitality employers, and local unions. They are designed to ensure that hotels, restaurants, cafeterias and gaming establishments can welcome guests safely during the COVID-19 era. Hospitality employers should collaborate with UNITE HERE to establish detailed protocols to ensure their proper implementation.

Oversight & implementation of these guidelines

- Each facility should establish a committee of managers and worker representatives to identify and evaluate COVID-19 exposure risks and their mitigation through application of these guidelines. The committee should meet regularly to reevaluate the operations of the facility.
- Each facility should establish detailed written procedures for implementing these guidelines. Such procedures should be supplied to all personnel in languages easily understood by employees.
- Facilities should also appoint a COVID-19 Response Facilitator responsible for all compliance.
- Each facility should maintain detailed records of all actions taken in response to possible instances of COVID-19, including locations, sanitation measures undertaken, and individuals who have been identified as having come into contact with suspected carriers.
- Each facility should maintain an adequate stock of personal protective equipment (PPE), and should distribute such equipment at no cost to employees.
- Employers should inform employees who have had contact with individuals who have tested positive for or are suspected to have COVID-19, as well as their bargaining representative, that such contact has occurred and should conduct appropriate contact tracing. To the extent permitted by law, employers should inform employees and their bargaining representative of the identity of the person who has tested positive or is suspected to have COVID-19.
- A person with detailed knowledge of facility protocols should be designated on each shift. Employees should be informed of the person's identity, and should report all relevant concerns, including the identity of possibly sick guests. Detailed logs of such reports, and resulting actions taken, should be maintained and made available to employees and their bargaining representatives upon request.
- City or county governments should finance and mandate workforce development programs to ensure common training standards appropriate to hospitality industries in each market, as well as to provide assistance in accessing paid time off benefits, public assistance, and other community-specific resources.
- Prior to the introduction of new workplace technologies, such devices should be evaluated for their impacts on public health, safety, and employees.

General health & screening

- Trained personnel should perform non-intrusive thermal screening on guests and employees upon entry into the facility. Any employee who exceeds 100.4°F (38°C) should be offered a second test no sooner than ten minutes after the first. Individuals with a temperature exceeding 100.4°F (38°C) should not be admitted to the facility, unless they present medical evidence (e.g. a doctor's note) that such temperature is likely due to a non-communicable condition.
- Employees denied work due to an abnormal temperature reading should receive on-site, employer-paid testing for COVID-19, and should be placed on fully-paid leave until test results are available.
- All employees should receive current guidance on recognizing COVID-19 symptoms.

Physical distancing

- Employees should not be required to congregate such that they are unable to maintain a six foot separation from each other. This may require staggering shifts and/or pre-shift meetings.
- Break areas, employee dining rooms, training areas and locker rooms should be made available so that all workers can maintain a six foot separation. Where this is not possible, break times should be staggered as much as practicable.
- Only non-touch timeclocks should be used. Biometric data should be strictly secured, and should not be used for any purpose other than to log the employee's presence in the facility.

Return-to-business

- All employees should be offered employer-paid tests to determine their current and past COVID-19 status. Tests should be provided with sufficient time for employees to receive results before they are scheduled to return to work.
- Employers should contract with third party organizations able to generate baseline statistics of past and present COVID-19 status across the workplace, and should provide such statistics to employees and their bargaining representatives to the maximum extent permitted by law.
- All rooms used since the declaration of a Public Health Emergency should be thoroughly cleaned according to the procedures below.
- All employees should receive health and sanitation training in re-opening orientations.
- All rooms used by persons under quarantine or isolation orders, or otherwise exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19 during the preceding seven days should be cleaned and disinfected by a specially-trained group of employees according to the procedures below.
- Plumbing and HVAC systems should be inspected by appropriately qualified maintenance personnel to ensure their healthy operation.
- If COVID-19 has been detected at any time during the preceding fourteen days in the state or province where the facility is located, no employee should be compelled to accept work.
- Any employee electing not to accept work should be considered to be on involuntary layoff. Employers should not challenge applications for unemployment benefits by employees subject to such involuntary layoff. Employees should be permitted to return to work at any time according to regular scheduling practices.
- No employee should be disciplined or retaliated against for refusing work they believe poses a risk to themselves or others or for reporting work conditions that they believe may be unsafe.
- No employer should issue attendance "points", demerits or discipline to any employee who calls out sick due to flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), who is subject to quarantine orders, who is directed to self-quarantine by the employer or a healthcare professional, who is diagnosed positive for COVID-19, or who is absent due to their child's COVID-19 related school closure.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Provide PPE at no cost to employees prior to each shift, and as equipment is soiled.
- For employees working in areas known to have been occupied by individuals under quarantine or isolation orders, or otherwise exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19, PPE should be provided so as to conform with CDC Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings.
- For all other employees, the following PPE should be provided: surgical masks, disposable gloves, goggles, disposable gowns and/or aprons, hair caps, biohazard disposal bags.
- Provide additional PPE necessary to ensure safe usage of all chemicals and equipment.
- Each facility should provide training on proper use of PPE, including procedures for donning and doffing.

Guest arrival and departure

- Guests should be asked to keep six-foot separation from anyone who is not travelling with them.
- Guests should be provided with masks and should wear them whenever practical in public areas.
- Signage should be prominently displayed near entry ways and reception desks instructing guests about their responsibilities under facility protocols. A designated manager in each public area should be responsible for enforcing these requirements.
- Guests should not touch doors entering the facility. Doors should either be propped open, should open automatically, or should be opened by a doorman.
- Shuttle buses should be thoroughly cleaned after each trip. Guests should not be allowed in front passenger seats, and plexiglass barriers should be installed to protect drivers wherever practical. If any guest is found to be under quarantine or isolation orders, or to exhibit symptoms associated with COVID-19, the vehicle should be immediately cleaned in accordance with the CDC's "Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles" guidance.
- Lobbies should be organized to promote six-foot separation of guests, including with floor markers.
- Front desk counters should have plexiglass sneeze/cough guards installed.
- Contactless tipping systems for guest service providers (e.g. bellmen, valet, etc.) should be provided.

General cleaning

- All common areas and surfaces should be cleaned at least daily.
- All high-traffic areas, such as lobbies restrooms, and break rooms, should be cleaned at least hourly.
- An inventory of high-touch surfaces should be created (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, chairs, work surfaces, washrooms, point-of-sale devices). Cleaning of such surfaces should occur at least every hour.
- Elevator surfaces and buttons should be cleaned multiple times per hour.
- Clean visibly dirty surfaces before disinfecting, unless stated otherwise on the product instructions. Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities.
- Use disinfectants from the US Environmental Protection Agency's "List N" or in Canada with a Drug Identification Number and a virucidal claim. Follow the instructions on the product label carefully.
- Floors and walls should be kept visibly clean and free of spills, dust and debris.
- Empty and clean garbage cans in public areas regularly.
- Items that cannot be easily disinfected should be removed (e.g., newspapers, writing pads, ornaments).
- All cleaning personnel should be given ample time to complete their tasks fully and safely.
- Uniforms should be laundered daily at no cost to employees daily.

Front-of-house food service

- Tables and barstools should be configured to maximize distance between parties, in conformance with public health guidelines.
- Banquet and convention areas should be set up to maximize distance between parties, in conformance with public health guidelines.
- Public areas in cafeterias should be organized to ensure orderly queuing to maintain physical distancing.
- Line servers and cashiers should have plexiglass barriers installed between them and the guests.
- Self-service trays, plates and utensils should not be made available.
- Extremely high-touch items (menus, salt/pepper shakers, etc) should be replaced with disposable items.
- Foods that may have been contaminated from coughs or sneezes should always be discarded.
- Buffets and other self-service options (including water, soda, and coffee dispensers) should be suspended, except where meals are made available in sealed containers.
- Make plain soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available, including at cashier stations.
- Regularly clean and disinfect equipment used for handling payments.
- Regularly clean and disinfect carts used for transporting food and picking up dirty dishes and between every shift.
- Implement contactless tipping systems for bartenders, cocktail servers, servers, etc.

Kitchens & dishwashing

- Kitchens should be reconfigured wherever practical to create six foot spacing between stations.
- Where six foot spacing between stations is not possible, staggered shifts should be considered for physically distancing work (e.g. prep work).
- Utensils and kitchen surfaces should be cleaned regularly using standard sanitizing solutions (e.g., QUATs or chlorine). Product label instructions should be followed closely.
- Dishes and cookware should be washed using regular procedures (e.g., sanitizing dishwasher)
- Used dishware from guests under quarantine or isolation orders, or otherwise exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19, must be washed and sanitized immediately.
- Food scraps should be scraped off manually from plates prior to beginning dishwashing. Use of sprayers should be minimized.
- Separately labeled “clean” and “dirty” carts and trays should be used for transporting food and for picking up used dishes. Carts and trays should be sanitized regularly.
- Dish buckets (dirty and clean) should be cleaned and sanitized after each shift.
- Clean and dirty dishes should be kept separate at all times in the dish washing area.

Room Service

- Food carts should not be delivered into guest rooms.
- “Clean” and “dirty” room service items should not be carried on the same cart.
- Room service items should not be collected from rooms occupied by isolating or quarantined guests, except by the specially-trained cleaning and sanitation team. Such items should be collected from outside the guestroom door.

Housekeeping

At least daily

- Cleaners should wash hands and should don a clean pair of gloves before entering each guest room.
- Disposable paper towels and wipes should be used for cleaning.
- Vacuums should not be used.
- Linens should be changed daily and should be washed at high temperatures.
- Dirty linens and towels should be bagged. Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry and discard after each use. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed. Do not allow dirty linens to come into contact with clean ones.
- Separate carts should be used to carry clean supplies and to remove used ones. Carts should be clearly labeled “clean” or “dirty”. Carts should be sanitized between every shift.
- Guests should not be incentivized to forego daily housekeeping services.

Upon checkout

- Guest rooms should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after checkout.
- Carpets should be steam cleaned at a minimum temperature of 160°F (71°C).
- An adequate supply of hand soap and hand sanitizer should be available in the guest room. All individual toiletries should be disposed of.
- All glassware and dishes should be removed from the room. Alternatively, disposable glassware, dishes and utensils should be provided in rooms.

Guests reporting or showing signs of illness:

- Any guest reporting or exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms should be presumed infectious.
- Staff should not enter self-isolation rooms until authorized.
- Housekeeping or room service items should be delivered outside guest room doors.
- Daily service should be provided by a specially trained team
- Garbage should be collected from outside the guestroom door in a sturdy, leak resistant bag. It should be placed immediately in the hotel’s main disposal container.
- Once the individual(s) in self-isolation have left a room, the room should be sanitized by a specially-trained team. Wherever practical, facilities should consider a sealing rooms for a seven-day period prior to sanitization. Complete a thorough cleaning of all hard surfaces with an approved disinfectant, launder all removable towels and linens, and steam clean items that cannot be laundered (plush chairs, drapes).

Fitness centers, spas, pools, and other recreational rooms

- These services should remain closed until public health authorities provide direction that they may be operated safely.
- Upon opening, these operations should be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized multiple times per day, as appropriate to customer volume.

Laundry

- Disposable gloves should be worn when handling dirty laundry and discarded after each use. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- If reusable gloves are worn, gloves should be dedicated for handling dirty laundry and should not be used for other purposes. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Dirty laundry should be placed directly into a linen bag without sorting. Do not overfill bags.
- Clearly mark laundry bins as “clean” or “dirty”. Ensure dirty laundry only contacts dirty laundry bins, and clean laundry only contacts clean laundry bins.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to manufacturer's guidance. Consider using a liner that can be laundered.
- Clean and sanitize the front loading area of washing machines frequently.
- Wash and dry items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest possible water settings. Dry all items thoroughly.

Gaming floors

- Casino supervisors and managers should ensure that guests do not congregate in groups and queue appropriately so that guests maintain six foot separation from each other and from employees, particularly at cage cashiers and in sports book and simulcast rooms.
- Protective barriers should be installed at all cages and cashier stations.
- Slot machines and table games should be turned off and/or reconfigured with the chairs removed to allow for six foot separation between guests.
- Slots, tables, and table game equipment (dice, chips, etc.) should be sanitized frequently.

Subcontracted and outsourced services

- Subcontracts for guest transportation, food production and delivery, laundry, and other guest services should require the service provider to implement the standards in this document. Subcontractors should have a direct employment relationship with their personnel to ensure conformance with these standards and to facilitate contact tracing.