



Reopening Guidance FAQs

Restaurants and bars *(Updated 5-17-2020)*

Operations

Q1: Can tables be pre-set? It seems like pre-setting tables reduces additional exposure opportunities for employees and customers?

A1: No. Tables cannot be pre-set and left to sit without patrons. If an employee wants to pre-set a table immediately prior to seating a party, particularly if this minimizes interaction between staff and customers, that is an acceptable practice.

Q2: In bathrooms, do we need a door monitor? If yes, should this person be full time?

A2: To the extent possible, businesses should, but are not required to assign an employee(s) to monitor customer access to common areas such as restrooms to ensure that customers do not congregate. Businesses may also post clear signs to remind patrons to maintain physical distance.

Q3: Why is there a curfew of 10:00pm and what is this based on? Can tables finish eating at 10:00pm or does everyone have to be out at 10:00pm?

A3: All restaurants must end all on-site consumption of food and drink by 10 p.m. These businesses must be closed to the public at that time except for the purposes of take-out service. The last seating should occur to ensure compliance. The restaurant will determine how to comply based on its service model.

Q4: Do we clean with bleach or peroxide solution? Does it need to be stronger in certain places? How often, with what product and when should we clean?

A4: Cleaning food contact surfaces in the kitchen and “back of house” should be done in accordance with the [Food Sanitation Rules OAR 333-150-0000](#). For “front of house” areas, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has pre-approved certain products that are effective against similar viruses to COVID-19. All disinfectant products that meet this standard are located [here](#).

Not all disinfectants are approved for food contact surfaces and should be rinsed and sanitized following the label. Look for the “Disinfection” section on the label of the product chosen and use the maximum contact time and most concentrated dilution rate (amount of disinfectant to mix with water) in this section.

Q5: Will my dishwasher, when run on its usual cycle, kill the COVID-19 virus?

A5: Yes, dishwashers that meet the current standards in food code by using chlorine or a high temperature at 160F at the dish rack are effective in killing viruses.

Q6: Are people required to be seated for on-site food and beverage consumption?

A6: Counter service is permitted for the purposes of ordering and/or picking up food. Seating for consumption is strongly preferred to help ensure adherence to the six (6) feet of distancing requirement.

Q7: Do Local Public Health Authorities (LPHA) have to approve a restaurant’s reopening plan prior to implementation? Does a restaurant have to develop a written plan? Will a certificate of COVID-19 compliance be developed or required to document that a facility complies with the Governor’s reopening guidance?

A7: No. Facilities are required to follow the [OHA guidance](#) but do not need prior approval from LPHAs to develop a written plan or obtain documentation certifying compliance.

Q8: Restaurants are required to discontinue onsite service of food and alcohol at 10 pm, but when are they allowed to open?

A8: Restaurants and bars should open the next day based on regularly scheduled opening business hours. Restaurants should not attempt to get around the 10:00 pm required closure by re-opening at midnight.

Q9: Are restrooms required to be disinfected between each customer use?

A9: No. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected frequently and as necessary, but it is not required between use by each customer.

Q10: Can senior centers reopen for food service? Are there any specific limitations on operation since they serve older individuals?

A10: Yes. As long as senior centers are located in counties that have been approved to enter Phase 1, they can offer food service. The food service within senior centers must follow [OHA guidance](#) for restaurants and bars. Senior centers serve a vulnerable population so they may wish to take additional safety measures.

Q11: Can facilities like bowling alleys that provide food but offer an activity that is closed under the Governor's Executive Orders reopen the food service portion?

A11: Yes. If the facility opens only the food service portion and follows the [OHA guidance](#).

Q12: Are customer self-service operations, such as continental breakfast, buffets, salad bars, Mongolian barbecues, beverage refilling stations (growlers and soda), and yogurt machines still prohibited?

A12: Yes. Food must be dispensed by employees and customer self-service operations are still not allowed. A Mongolian barbecue can operate if the employees assemble the raw ingredients as they are selected by the customer prior to being cooked. Self-service operations in grocery stores, such as bulk foods and olive bars, are allowed.

Q13: Does phase 1 reopening include bars, tasting rooms, brew pubs and wine bars?

A13: Phase 1 allows all eating and drinking establishments to open. However, on-site consumption of food and drink must cease by 10:00 p.m.

Q14: Do musicians count as staff or are they part of the 25-person maximum?

A14: There is not a 25-person maximum for restaurant occupancy - only for gatherings. If musicians are playing at a civic gathering this would count towards the 25-person maximum. The maximum restaurant occupancy should be determined by the owner/manager based on the number of patrons that can be accommodated while maintaining six (6) foot distance between parties, including when customers approach or leave tables. Musicians that are able to maintain at least six (6) feet physical distance from customers—and each other is allowable.

Q15: Where are we supposed to obtain disinfectant sprays, wipes?

A15: Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association (ORLA) maintains a [list](#) of cleaning product vendors available for businesses.

Q16: Where do we find guidance for tasting rooms?

A16: Guidance for Restaurants/Bars/Breweries/Tasting Rooms/Distilleries is all found in the same [document](#).

Q17: Do restaurants need to apply to reopen?

A17: No. Counties must apply to move into Phase 1. Once the county is approved to enter Phase 1, restaurants will no longer be required to limit themselves to take-

out/delivery. (If your OLCC license has lapsed due to non-payment, that needs to be renewed. Oregon Lottery will also need to inspect your VLT machines prior to activating them.)

Q18: Linen napkins versus paper napkins. Linen company retrieves used linens once a week. What is the suggested preference?

A18: Clean linen napkins are an acceptable practice. Pay careful attention to the storage of the used/dirty linens. Dirty linen should be stored in a plastic bag or other container with a lid.

Q19: Are there different regulations for those with Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) enforced food programs and Oregon Health Authority (OHA) enforced food programs?

A19: Generally, the only differences are in the use of gloves. Gloves are required for all food contact activities in facilities regulated by ODA. OHA regulated facilities should follow [Food Code Fact Sheet #1 – Minimizing Bare Hand Contact](#).

Q20: Would you suggest that restaurant silverware be rolled into the linen napkin?

A20: Yes, that is a good practice but not a requirement of food and beverage establishments.

Q21: Who would be the best contact to request more clarification on recommendations?

A21: Questions and requests for clarification on the state guidance should be submitted to covid19.reopening@dhsaha.state.or.us.

Q22: Are sushi trains and cart-style dim sum restaurants included under “self-service operations” banned under Phase 1?

A22: A sushi train is considered self-service and is not allowed since the small plates that go around on the conveyor belt are picked up by the customer.

If the customers are ordering from a dim sum cart but are not serving themselves, it would be allowed under the [OHA guidance](#). The facility should take precautions to protect the food on the cart from contamination while wheeling it around the restaurant.

Q23: Will there be specific guidance for bed & breakfasts and small lodging facilities opening for general tourism (specifically relating to food handling)?

A23: Lodging establishments should follow the [OHA guidance](#) in all of their food service operations.

Q24: Does the 10:00pm curfew for on-site food and beverage consumption apply to restaurants or cafes inside of hospitals or other health care facilities?

A24: No. The restrictions for on-site consumption do not apply to food service in health care facilities (including hospitals), child care facilities, workplaces, government buildings, emergency response facilities, school-based programs, or shelter and meal programs serving vulnerable populations.

Q25: Are customer seats upholstered with fabric or other porous material required to be disinfected between customers?

A25: No. There is no requirement to disinfect fabric upholstered seating between customers.

Q26: I have a liquor license. Where can I find OLCC guidance about reopening?

A26: The OLCC fact sheet for reopening can be found [here](#).

Q27: I would like to extend the premises of my business into a public or private space and serve alcohol, while maintaining physical distancing. Can I do this?

A27: OLCC has an application for extending your premises. You can find the application and instructions [here](#).

Q28: I have other questions about COVID-19 related to my liquor license. Where can I find answers?

A28: The OLCC maintains a FAQ sheet, which is updated regularly. You can find it [here](#).

Distancing and Occupancy

Q1: Can you clarify when bar/counter seating is allowed?

A1: If a counter/bar backs up directly against a wall or window, seating is allowed as long as at least six (6) feet of distance is maintained between parties. If there is any open area between the counter/bar and the wall or window, seating is not allowed.

Q2: How do you determine “maximum occupancy” to meet the Governor’s reopening guidance?

A2: The Governor’s guidance does not specify a maximum occupancy for food and beverage establishments. The establishment operator will need to determine how many customers they can accommodate while effectively maintaining the physical

distancing standard of six (6) feet between parties and staff. Parties sitting at the same table of 10 or fewer are allowed to be less than six feet apart.

Q3: Do delis and seating areas for food consumption in grocery stores have to follow the same OHA guidance for restaurants and bars?

A3: Yes.

Q4: If a booth has high seat backs can there be less than six (6) feet between dining parties?

A4: No. The physical distancing requirement of six feet must be maintained between customers that are not part of the same dining party.

Q5: If a restaurant installs plexiglass, plastic sheeting, or some other barrier between tables or lottery machines, can they be less than six (6) feet apart? Can a facility install plexiglass at the bar? Does this count as a wall or window so they can allow seating at the bar with six foot spacing between customers?

A5: No. The physical distancing requirement of six (6) feet must be maintained between customers that are not part of the same dining party. Installing barriers in a facility to separate customers from each other or staff may restrict or alter air flow in a way that could create stagnant air pockets.

Q6: Does the six-foot physical distancing requirement apply to outdoor seating?

A6: Yes. Six (6) feet of physical distance must be maintained between parties regardless of whether they are seated indoors or outdoors.

Q7: Can parties up to 25 people be accommodated in a banquet room if limited to 10 people at a table?

A7: No. [OHA guidance](#) states that parties must be limited to 10 people or fewer. People in the same party seated at the same table do not have to be six (6) feet apart.

Q8: Does a restaurant need to restrict access to sinks, urinals or toilets to ensure that customers meet the six-foot physical distancing requirements?

A8: No. However, to the extent possible, facilities should assign an employee(s) to monitor customer access to common areas such as restrooms to ensure that customers do not congregate.

Q9: For guests that sit and are served outside of a restaurant, are there any distance limitations from the building for guest seating?

A9: The OHA guidance does not include a minimum or maximum distance between a building and guest seating. Restaurants should check with your local city or county to check if your changes comply with local code.

Q10: Does the restaurant have to be set up so that customers entering a restaurant or walking through the restaurant to a table must maintain a (6) foot safety barrier between themselves and other customers throughout their trip to the table?

A10: There should be a six (6) feet of distance between any area where a customer is likely to linger (e.g., just inside the entrance or waiting for the restroom). If possible, the dining room should be set up to allow at least six (6) feet of distance at all times. However, in smaller restaurants where that is not feasible (e.g., would force the elimination of most capacity), it is acceptable for customers to briefly pass within six (6) feet of seated customers as they move to or from their table.

Q11: Is the six (6) foot rule from table to table? Or from seated customer to seated customer at another table?

A11: Tables need to be spaced at least six (6) feet apart so that there is at least six (6) feet of physical distance between people not in the same party.

Q12: Does an employee have to stand six (6) feet away when taking an order?

A12: For the safety of employees and customers, six (6) feet of physical distance between employees and customers must be maintained as much as possible, but the OHA guidance recognizes that for the purposes of ordering and serving food at a table, six (6) feet will not always be able to be maintained.

Q13: Can tasting rooms have outside music?

A13: Musicians that are able to maintain at least six (6) feet physical distance from customers and each other is allowable.

Q14: If a table faces a wall (or other barrier), and therefore the customer's back is to the room, do we still need six (6) feet behind the customer?

A14: Yes.

Q15: What are the rules for events in banquet spaces of hotels?

A15: Executive Order 20-25 only permits social and recreational gatherings of up to 10 people so long as at least six (6) feet can be consistently maintained between individuals from different households.

Employees

Q1: Why should employees use utensils instead of bare hands when handling food?

A1: Handwashing with plain soap and water may not be adequate to prevent the transmission of pathogenic microbes from hands to ready-to-eat foods during food preparation. ODA licensed facilities are not allowed to use bare hands when handling food per regulation of the ODA Food Code requirement section: 3-301.11 Preventing Contamination from hands.

Q2: Restaurant workers are concerned about wearing masks all day in a hot kitchen and buildup of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂.) Is there any data about risk of CO₂ and cloth face masks?

A2: Cloth face coverings are not airtight therefore it's unlikely that any CO₂ will buildup. Face coverings are worn to cover the nose and mouth to prevent spread of droplets from one person to another in a community setting.

Q3: Restaurant workers are concerned about wearing masks all day in a hot kitchen. What should workers do to prevent overheating, heat exhaustion or trouble breathing if they are required to wear a face covering?

A3: Workers should wear a face covering that they can freely breathe in and take breaks during the work hours to leave the hot kitchen. Businesses are required to provide masks, face shields, or face coverings for employees following [OHA guidance](#).

Q4: Are all employees required to wear face coverings or only front of the house employees that interact directly with customers? Are employees required to wear a mask or can they wear cloth face coverings instead?

A4: All food service employees, regardless of job task, are required to wear face coverings at all times while in the establishment. This includes cooks, employees working in drive thru areas and takeout restaurants that provide no indoor seating. Employees can use cloth, paper, or disposable face coverings.

Q5: Why is there a new mandate that all restaurant employees wear face coverings, given that we have not been required to wear them in the past?

A5: With customers eating on-site there is additional risk of exposure, in general. Recent studies have shown that wearing a face covering can reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) Operations

Q1: The restaurant VLT guidance says “place VLTs at least six (6) feet apart.” I believe I was told that businesses aren’t supposed to touch/move the machines themselves. **Is that right? Should the guidance really be that OLCC will inspect your machines and work with you on appropriate placement prior to activating?**

A1: VLTs are inspected by Oregon State Lottery (OSL). If a restaurant/bar needs to have them moved, they should contact OSL who will dispatch assistance from the closest field office. Before OSL can turn the machines back on, they have to be satisfied that the physical distancing requirements of six (6) feet have been met.

Q2: Does the 10:00 p.m. cutoff time apply to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs)?

A2: Yes, the 10:00pm cutoff applies to Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs).

For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide documents in alternate formats such as other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or OHA.ADAModifications@dhsoha.state.or.us.