

GETTING BACK TO WORK IN NEVADA

RESTAURANT TIP SHEET

Your business may look very different as it begins to recover from COVID-19 impacts. To move forward, your business will need to adapt to new safety and health guidelines and respond to new and increased expectations from staff and customers. New practices and guidelines will become commonplace in order for customers to feel safe frequenting their favorite eateries.

To help you get started we have put together this tip sheet that focuses on four important areas: **Requirements, React, Recover, Be Resilient**. We conclude the tip sheet with a list of **Resources** to help you.

REQUIREMENTS: *Nevada Phase 1 Reopening*

On May 7, 2020, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak announced *The Roadmap to Recovery for Nevada: Phase 1*. In the roadmap, restaurants are strongly encouraged to continue curbside, delivery, and/or pickup operations. In addition, the following guidelines are provided for reopening restaurants for dine-in services during Phase 1.

Restaurants are allowed to open for dine-in services under strict social distancing requirements:

- Reservations should be required when practicable to better achieve social distancing requirements
- If waiting to be seated, patrons must wait outside and practice social distancing
- Restaurants shall require employees to wear face coverings and should encourage customers to wear face coverings, to the maximum extent practicable
- Employers must perform a daily assessment of employees for any COVID-19 type symptoms (fever, cough, and trouble breathing); require employees to stay home when symptomatic
- Tables or available booths must be spaced at least 6 feet apart
- In-person or on-premises dining is limited to no more than 50% of available seating capacity, excluding bar seating – close bar areas for seating
- Bar tops & bar areas within restaurants remain closed (can serve drinks at table)
- Buffets and self-service stations (salad bars, beverage stations, condiments, etc.) are NOT permitted

All businesses *are encouraged to*:

- Have hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers
- Frequently perform enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces
- Designate – with signage, tape, or by other means – six feet of spacing for employees and customers to maintain appropriate social distancing
- Encourage employees to do a self-assessment each day in order to check if they have any COVID-19 type symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath)
- Remind employees to stay home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice frequent hand hygiene
- Close common areas where personnel are likely to congregate and enforce strict social distancing
- Implement separate operating hours for the elderly and vulnerable customers

REACT: *Get ready to open your doors again!*

Be Prepared – Based on the above guidelines, below is a starter checklist of what you might need or find helpful to purchase or prepare before you reopen. Always check with the state, your county, and your local health district for current operating guidelines because local jurisdictions can impose stricter requirements:

- Masks for employees (and as a courtesy for customers)
- Face shields for employees, where applicable (for example, dishwashers)
- Gloves for employees
- EPA-approved COVID-19 cleaners & disinfectants (See RESOURCES for link)
- Touchless hand sanitizer stations
- Touchless payment systems
- Additional POS stations
- Plexiglass/clear acrylic partitions
- Disposable utensils, plates & cups
- Chalkboards for menus (or televisions or whiteboards)
- Web-based menus that consumers can view via phone or mobile app
- Disposable menus
- Touchless thermometer for employee use
- Spare HVAC filters

Expand Services to Meet your Customer's Needs

Have you already started take-out service and delivery options as part of your reaction to COVID-19? If not, start considering now if you can add take-out service and/or delivery to your operations. In the early phases of reopening the economy, dine-in capacity will need to be reduced by at least 50%.

- Offer take-out with curbside pickup and online, over-the-phone, or touchless payment choices
- Partner with delivery services such as DoorDash, Grubhub, and Uber Eats to have more avenues for your food to be delivered. Drivers should use hand sanitizer or new gloves before each delivery
- Offer family meals, meal kits, and quarantine kits for families to cook, prepare and eat at home
- Consider bundling take-out with high demand items such as complimentary small packets of disinfecting wipes, small bottles of hand sanitizer,
- If signature is required for payment, offer single use complimentary pens with your business name
- Consider offering cocktails and/or beer to go where allowed

RECOVER: *Expect new ways of doing business. The new dine-in experience.*

Reopening requires restaurants to adapt to new operating requirements that include the above social distancing and enhanced health and safety guidelines. Some best practices and tips that may help implement the new guidelines include:

Operations

- Deep clean your restaurant before the initial reopening and then daily upon reopening
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices for high contact surfaces; it is recommended to routinely clean dirty surfaces first with soap and water and then use US EPA-approved COVID-19 disinfectants to limit the spread of the virus
- Establish new operating hours so you can close earlier and each night an employee can thoroughly clean the restaurant
- Eliminate tables to create more space between the customers in the restaurant - tables must be at least 6 feet apart. Another rule of thumb is no more than 10 diners per 500 square feet
- Consider installing plexiglass/clear acrylic panels or barriers between booths and tables
- Provide touchless hand sanitizer stations for employees and guests, particularly at entry points
- Hosts preferably to open doors and guide guests to their seats and hand sanitizer stations
- A dedicated staff member should be assigned to clear and sanitize each table or booth once guests have departed and staff should avoid touching items that have been placed on tables
- Provide pre-wrapped/rolled utensils or use disposable utensils, plates and cups
- Eliminate buffets and self-serve, including self-serve of condiments (use pre-packaged)
- Menus: minimize the touching of menus between guests
 - Set up chalkboards, television screens, or whiteboards to display your menu
 - Update your website to be mobile-friendly and post your menu for guests to view on their phones
 - Print disposable menus or laminated menus that can be immersed in disinfectant between guests
- Payment:
 - Install and use a touchless, non-signature payment system
 - Have customers pay through an app on their phones

Employees

- Provide and require employees to wear face masks
- Provide employees with gloves to wear and/or provide instruction on proper hand hygiene to practice between interactions with each table
- Consider no touch thermometers to conduct pre-shift employee temperature checks and do not allow anyone with a temperature over 100F degrees to work (keep a log of daily employee assessments)
- Stagger lunches and breaks for social distancing

Guests

- Require reservations and have customers wait outside or in their cars until their table is ready
- Consider limiting tables to groups of 5, preferably members of the same household
- Mark off six-foot distances on the floor to maintain space at the host station and payment stations
- Encourage customers to wear face coverings; provide masks for guests not arriving with their own
- Encourage guests in high risk groups to order take-out or delivery in early phases of reopening
- Provide entry signage and encourage patrons with COVID-19 symptoms to order take-out or delivery

BE RESILIENT: *This is all new. Adapt as necessary. Let's stay in business together.*

Business basics will be more important than ever. Evaluate your profit and loss statement. Look for ways to reduce operating and food costs. Analyze your cash flow and breakeven to evaluate the impacts of the new guidelines and best practices on your restaurant operations. As Nevada reopens in phases, you may need to continually adjust your operations. Here are a few things to think about:

Get Help

- Contact a business development counselor at the Nevada SBDC by calling 800.240.7094 – we can help you assess your operations and decide on best strategies for your business
- For questions about cleaning and disinfecting, strategies to control new waste streams, or other environmental questions, contact an environmental business advisor at BEP at 800.882.3233.

Communicate

- Keep communicating with your customers on social media and your website with announcements about your reopening, make sure they know you are not shut down for good
- Be open about the measures you are taking to meet the Phase 1 reopening guidelines; consider signage at your entrance so customers can be aware of the steps you are taking
- Provide signage in the restaurant and on your website to let your customers know what you are doing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to meet new industry guidelines
- Be patient, communicate openly with staff while waiting for customers to return

Expanded Services

- Offer take-out with curbside pickup
- Offer delivery options
- Continue to offer gift cards
- Consider increasing outdoor seating options; can parking spaces be converted to outdoor seating?
- Offer meal kits for cooking at home
- Offer to sell fresh fruits and vegetables and other food supplies like flour, where allowed

Potential Cost-Saving Measures

- Revamp and simplify your menu to increase margins, minimize food prep and reduce food waste
- Revisit your menu costing and adjust pricing if needed to cover costs
- Reduce hours to minimize utility bills and increase time for cleaning, for example instead of staying open from 12:00 PM to 10:00 PM operate from 5:00 PM to 10:00 PM.
- Only turn on utilities that are needed – do not use all fans, lights, or air conditioners in the restaurant when fewer people are seated

Creative Marketing

- Update or redesign your website; make sure it is mobile friendly
- Use micro social media and focus more on the immediate neighborhood in order to bring in local customers
- Advertise through local homeowner associations
- Consider sharing some favorite recipes, wine and drink pairing suggestions, and other tips for customers on social media; create a following and keep in touch with customers

RESOURCES

Below are additional resources to help restaurants react, recover, and be resilient in the face of COVID-19.

Nevada SBDC Small Business Recovery Procurement List

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vRaNqMHmNRt3ZAlsoivMUghuvuZBOsNx8d6WG-S7HVjfPlsqrb5HfYXd6OCi2-9FA/pubhtml>

US EPA List N: Disinfectants Approved for Use Against SARS-CoV-2

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Guidance for Businesses and Employers

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

Nevada Health Response | COVID-19 in Nevada

<https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>

Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) COVID-19 Guidance for Food Establishments

<https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus/guidance-to-reopen-businesses-and-permitted-facilities/>

Nevada Restaurant Association Coronavirus Information

<https://www.nvrestaurants.com/welcomeback.html>

National Restaurant Association COVID-19 Reopening Guidance

<https://restaurant.org/Downloads/PDFs/business/COVID19-Reopen-Guidance.pdf>

Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development

<https://www.diversifynevada.com/>

Nevada Department of Business & Industry, Occupational Safety & Health Administration

<http://dir.nv.gov/OSHA/Home/>

Restaurant Employee Relief Fund

<https://rerf.us/>

Small Business Federal Financial Assistance

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/smallbusiness>

Association of Small Business Development Centers | COVID-19 Small Business Resources

<https://americassbdc.org/covid19/>

This tip sheet will be updated as new information becomes available.

Stay Safe to Stay Open Nevada!

The Nevada Small Business Development Center (SBDC) guides and assists Nevadans looking to start and grow businesses. We are available to counsel on business planning and management issues raised in this tip sheet. One-on-one counseling services are free and confidential.

The Business Environmental Program (BEP) is affiliated with the Nevada SBDC and provides free and confidential environmental compliance and management assistance and can help your business think about cleaning and waste issues. Our focus is on making Nevada's businesses stronger and more environmentally responsible.

DISCLAIMER: This guidance document is intended as general information and is not provided nor intended to act as a substitute for legal advice or other professional services. The Nevada SBDC advises the regulated business community to read all applicable regulations and to check with state and local authorities, including local health districts, for the latest in guidelines and requirements for businesses reopening during the COVID-19 pandemic. This tip sheet is funded, in part, through a Cooperative Agreement with the US Small Business Administration and funding support from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. All opinions, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.