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Recommendations for VWVCC Tasting Rooms

In Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus

**Prepared by
Wine Sub-Sector of the
Restaurant Sector Subcommittee
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Introduction

Beginning in February 2020 Governor Kate Brown began taking actions to mitigate the public health threat of the novel infectious coronavirus (COVID-19). She has issued Orders that prohibited large gatherings of people, the operation of certain businesses, and require Oregonians to “Stay Home and Save Lives.” Those Orders appear to have “flattened the curve” of COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths in Oregon. Once the incidence of the COVID-19 disease is manageable, business and social activities can be restored. However, increasing business and social activities creates a potential for infection rates to once again accelerate. Therefore, the Governor’s office is implementing a phased approach to Reopening Oregon. Each phase of reopening will require that public health **Gating Criteria** are met and **Core Preparedness** of health systems and businesses are in place.

Gating Criteria include:

- 1) a downward trajectory of reported influenza and COVID-19 symptoms over a 14-day period,
- 2) a declining trajectory of documented cases of COVID-19, and positive tests as a percentage of total tests, over a 14-day period, and
- 3) the hospital capacity to treat all patients without crisis care, and the establishment of a robust testing program for at-risk health-care workers including emerging antibody testing.

Core Preparedness includes:

- 1) Capabilities for COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing,
- 2) Healthcare System Capacity - including adequate PPE & ICU resources, and
- 3) Plans to protect high risk individuals, employees, and customers including: methods for implementing social distancing protocols, and systems to monitor conditions and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks.

One aspect of Core Preparedness is the ability for businesses to identify risk levels in the workplace and to implement requirements that minimize the spread of COVID-19. The Oregon wine industry is developing detailed guidelines and a training program for Healthful Operation and Sanitary Practices for Wine Tasting Rooms in Response to COVID-19. Those guidelines have been developed based on OSHA's [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#), the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) [Personal Infection Prevention Measures](#), Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) [Cleaning Tips to Prevent Spread of COVID-19](#), and the CDC's guidance for [Managing Persons with Potential COVID-19](#). The following is an overview of the specific requirements for wine tasting rooms that are necessary to ensure healthful and sanitary operations for customers and employees. Periodic review of these requirements will be performed to ensure best practices are maintained, and to adapt the requirements as the health risk from COVID-19 increases or decreases.

Social Distancing Protocols

The following requirements are strongly encouraged:

- Individuals and “associated groups” will maintain a separation of six-feet except for required transactions.
- Individuals in an “associated group” will be permitted to be in closer proximity than six-feet. An “**associated group**” will be individuals that have chosen to congregate together. Associated groups will be required to maintain a six-foot distance from other individuals or groups. **Associated groups of more than ten (10) people will not be permitted.**
- Accommodations will be made for customers waiting for seating or service that allow for a six-foot distance between individuals or associated groups.
- Accommodations will be made for payments that allow for a six-foot distance between customers.
- Where possible, “bottlenecks” will be reduced to reduce proximity, e.g. bathrooms, reception areas, and wine bar, e.g. place tape on the floor to indicate a 6 feet separation.
- Servers should not directly face customers when presenting wines or taking orders, i.e. angle alignment.

The following are recommendations to limit personal interactions:

- Utilize appointments for service to ensure social distancing will be maintained.
- Post and enforce a maximum occupancy permitted inside the facility.
- Where possible, expand outside seating to limit indoor proximity.
- Encourage glass pours and bottle service to limit personal interaction.
- Tastings of a “flight” of wine could be poured at one time rather than requiring repeated visits for each selection. Small groups could be offered a carafe of each selection.

Personnel Illness Requirements

The CDC provides guidelines for [Managing Persons with Potential COVID-19](#) infection. The following is an overview of key guidelines for tasting room employees that have potential exposure.

- Employees with symptoms of respiratory illness must stay home. This includes those with a fever (100.4° F) or greater, or other symptoms like cough, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Employees must be without fever for 24 hrs. (after finishing fever reducing medicines) before returning to work.
- Employee will inform their managers regarding any exposure to persons that have tested positive for COVID-19 or exposure to any person that has symptoms of COVID-19, e.g. fever, cough, or sore throat.
- The need for an employee to self-quarantine out of concern for Potential COVID-19 infection should be addressed on a case-by-case basis based on the CDC guidelines reference above.
- Employees must inform their supervisor immediately after noticing symptoms of becoming sick, even at home.

Personal Infection Prevention Measures

The CDC provides guidelines for [Protecting Yourself and Others](#). The following are tasting room specific guidelines.

- Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer. This includes after handling any items used by customers, e.g. wine glasses, wine bottles, utensils, iPads, credit cards, money.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you frequently touch, e.g. counters, doorknobs, phones, iPads.
- Wineries are encouraged to employ No Touch Payment options, e.g. Apple Pay, Google Pay, Samsung Pay.
- Use a dedicated iPad (or other POS) that you have sanitized and immediately sanitize the iPad and card-reader if a customer touches it. Offer to sign "X" on behalf of the customer to avoid them touching the iPad.
- Consider wearing a face mask when in close contact with others for an extended period of time.
- Consider wearing gloves during any key handoffs with customers.

Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines

The ODA provides [Cleaning Tips to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#). The following are additional tasting room specific guidelines.

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched items and surfaces in the workplace, such as iPads, keyboards, telephones, remote controls, kitchen surfaces, tables and chairs, desks, bathroom surfaces, doorknobs, and other work tools, equipment and high contact surfaces.
- For disinfection, use EPA-registered disinfectants. Utilize disposable disinfecting wipes to clean commonly used surfaces on a regular basis.
- Avoid using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Sanitize all wine and water glasses in a sanitizer (e.g. Hobart) after every use.
- Wash hands before picking up a polishing cloth to polish wine glasses.
- Wash all dishes in a dish-waster (in sanitization mode) or with disinfectant.

Organizational Considerations

- Designate an employee to establish, implement, and enforce social distancing policies.
- Ensure availability of sanitizing gel, disinfecting wipes, tissues, EPA-registered disinfectants.
- Post informational signage on social distancing (e.g. 6-feet), no admittance of individuals with flu symptoms (e.g. fever or cough), and personal hygiene (e.g. wash hands).
- Develop a cleaning check list with timing required for various surfaces.
- Establish a process for confidential reporting personal illness and close contact with individuals that test positive for or have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Holding regular staff meetings to re-enforce and communicate:
 - Up-to-date information on COVID-19
 - Social Distancing Protocols
 - Personnel Illness Requirements
 - Personal Infection Prevention Measures
 - Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines
 - A proactive sick leave policy