



What Might You Need to Re-Open? A Business/Company Re-Opening Checklist

Unfortunately, we do not yet know for certain what will make our stores, restaurants, tasting rooms and offices more able to comply with what we expect are phased re-opening guidelines coming forth by California and Sonoma County officials. Our list is far from perfect (and please see our **disclaimer** at the end), but rather than let that be the enemy of a PG (pretty good) checklist, it is timely to think about:

- What should we be preparing for?
- What infrastructure and layout changes should I plan for?
- What supplies should I have on hand immediately before and after I re-open?

Other sources of good information include (and this is not an exhaustive list):

- the [National Restaurant Association](#)
- The State of California's COVID-19 site – the [Resilience Roadmap](#)
- The Sonoma County [Economic Development Board](#)

For Me and for The Staff

- Have a good place to wash hands frequently, with no-touch hardware (no-touch soap and sanitizer dispensers, air dryers, paper towel dispensers). Consider a trash can near the washroom door, so that people can use the paper towels to open the door as they leave.
- Have Clorox or Lysol Wipes for rapid clean-ups that are more regular than the typical janitorial services – spaces cleaned/wiped regularly would include:
 - Railings
 - Door pulls/pushes
 - Customer counter tops
 - Light switches
 - Phones
 - Computer keyboards
 - Payment device keyboards and touchscreen payment devices
 - Chair armrests
- Have adequate supplies of hand sanitizer
- Have a good supply of hand soap
- We advise getting one or more Thermal Thermometers **soon** (they can be purchased online) and having it onhand. Such a device may be needed to check staff's temperatures, or even customers/guests should a situation present itself and/or guidance be issued by State or local agencies (for an example of how to check temperatures, see this [YouTube](#) link).

- Do COVID-19 self-symptom screenings at the beginning of a shift, and a check-in during the day to make sure staff is feeling well. Write up a symptom-screening protocol to describe this (we can email you the City of Healdsburg's protocol if you [ask](#)). Sonoma County is working with IBM to develop a self-screening app.
- As to lunch and break rooms, are there spaces outdoors you can use (despite the summer heat)? If some are nearby but not controlled by you, can you use them with permission?
- Consider your whole staff:
 - Are there members who are essential to your operations?
 - What about those who are more vulnerable because of health or age?
 - While you want to protect everyone, how can you best protect these groups or limit their interaction with others?
- Have facial coverings for staff – these are not likely to be N95 masks, but surgical masks or custom facial coverings (maybe consider all staff having the same style/fabric).
- Consider some type of Plexiglas partition between customers and staff, at cashiering area or similar.
- Have disposable plastic covers for keyboards and phones if possible.
- Prepare a written document that describes all of the above.

For My Customers

- You'll likely need a way to **space people out**, including with building entry protocols and what to do when customers are in the store, building, or tasting room. Think about ways to:
 - Queue people outside if you need to, only allowing a small number of customers inside at any one time. Do you need help from the City to use public right-of-way to queue?
 - Queue people inside in a manner that keeps them as separate as possible.
 - Limit interaction between customers inside – **such as one-way aisles**.
- What are ways to **minimize touchable spaces**:
 - Can the door be propped open?
 - Are there waiting areas inside or outside that should be removed to eliminate a gathering point?
 - Do you have items on counters (a bell, credit card readers, pens) that could be removed but still allow your business to function?
 - Can you limit use of water fountains?
 - If you have a restroom for customers, what are ways to keep touchable spaces there cleaner after each use?
- How customers pay for items.** Considerations can include:
 - Is it feasible to use Venmo, the CashApp, Apple Wallet and other ways to “no-touch” pay?
 - Can you email your customer list welcoming them back, but asking them to download a no-touch pay system before their next visit?
 - If you still have a card reader, consider a **plastic but touchable cover** and cleaning the plastic between uses.
 - For frequent customers, encourage people to order and pay online, for a simple hand-off out front or out back.

- Signage** about all of the above – on my website, in front of my store, in my store.

In an Office Setting

- As employees arrive at work:
 - Have mask requirements or mask distribution
 - Symptom-screen for admittance to the office (Sonoma County app is pending)
 - Use a Thermal Thermometer (self-administered) for entry in the morning, back from lunch; and
 - Written protocols for the above.
- Review the essential as well as the vulnerable employees noted in the staffing section – what are my strategies here?
- Plan and communicate **cleaning regimens** to your staffs. Provide for more frequent and visible cleaning during the workday – having staff see the cleaning occurring can be additionally reassuring. Consider:
 - A requirement that all memorabilia come off of desks.
 - That at the end of the day, desks must be clean of all paperwork.
 - Disposable paper mats for desks.
 - A prohibition against eating at one's desk.
- Consider **improvements to floor layouts** as follows:
 - Physically modify your work stations. But, if you cannot move workstations and the stations are too close, consider:
 - Staggering workers so that every other workspace is occupied.
 - Staggering work schedules.
 - Snap-on desk partitions
 - If you need more space, reconfigure flexible spaces (conference rooms, waiting areas, more) to make more workstation space
 - Consider eliminating access to common areas for a period of time. Subset:
 - Consider eliminating shared service items in the kitchen.
 - Remove seating furniture in some entry and gathering spaces
 - Close on-site gyms, or limit use to fewer people at any one time with distancing, masks, and additional cleaning after each use.
 - No more shared workstations. If you need to have shared workstations, have additional cleaning and disposable paper mats and keyboard covers.
 - Remove every other chair from a conference room, or roping some chairs off.
- Hardware Changes:
 - Take doors off of hinges, or prop open. If you have the ability to do so, consider doing this with entryways to restrooms (similar to that in an airport).
 - Provide for one-way traffic flows in public and back-office spaces
 - Have [foot pulls](#) at the base of doors, especially restroom doors.
 - Hand signs or space markers to remind others to keep their distance
- Not a lot of elevators locally, but if you have one, establish safe zones in and around elevators – marking out on the floor where people would stand safely. Mark-out safe zones outside of each elevator bay.

- Some companies are considering Contact Tracing applications between co-workers, so if someone does fall ill, their contacts are noted. Privacy concerns inhibit this, but one way to partially address this is to assure that data is destroyed within 4-5 days of every collection day. Also:
 - Track who sits where; and
 - Designate isolation rooms in the office in case someone does get sick and can't get home right away.
 - For payment areas: Like the above, considerations can include:
 - Is it feasible to use Venmo, the CashApp, Apple Wallet and other ways to “no-touch” pay?
 - Can you email your client/customer list welcoming them back, but asking them to download a no-touch pay system?
 - If you still have a card reader, consider a **plastic but touchable cover** and cleaning the plastic between uses.
 - For frequent customers, encourage people to order and pay online.
 - Distancing lines around payment counters.
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Other Guidance from the CA Restaurant Assn:

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, one of the state leaders working in regional consortia to come up with detailed plans and schedules, suggested a likely scenario:

“You may be having dinner with a waiter wearing gloves, maybe a face mask, dinner where the menu is disposable, where half of the tables in that restaurant no longer appear, where your temperature is checked before you walk into the establishment.”

In other words, it will take some doing to make it all work. Whether your restaurant remained open for takeout and delivery during this period of social distancing, or you closed down entirely, here's how you can start rebuilding your business.

1. **Understand the new rules and limitations.** They won't be the same across the country. Figure out how you can comply. (Your [local restaurant association](#) can advise you.) For example:
 - Where will you purchase masks and gloves for staff?
 - What about noncontact thermometers? How will front-of-house staff enforce customer occupancy limits and physical distancing rules?
 - Who will be in charge of training staff to use these new tools, procedures and sanitation regimens?
2. **Follow established guidelines for reopening safely**, with protocols for safe food handling, cleaning and sanitizing, employee health and hygiene, and social distancing. Start with the National Restaurant Association [COVID-19 Reopening Guidance](#).

3. **Deep clean and sanitize your restaurant.** Hire a specialty service to deep clean every single surface in the front- and back-of-the-house, or have your staff do it. Don't forget to clean and sanitize the drive-thru station, all POS equipment and staff headsets. Check out CDC guidance and cleaning [here](#). Later, when it's time to open, you can publicize your efforts — even make a video of it.
4. **Reconfigure and rethink the dining room.** Even if a minimum distance between tables isn't mandated in your area, guests will be shy at first about close contact. Space out tables and chairs, even bar stools. You can put barriers between booths. If there's enough time and money before the reopening, consider freshening your dining room with a new coat of paint.
5. **Think about maximizing revenue.** With half as many chairs and tables in the dining room than you had before, you could experience reduced dine-in sales. What would make sense to optimize dine-in receipts?
 - Could you switch from table service to counter service, at least for part of the day?
 - Could you find an additional seating area? With warm weather on the way, it may be a good time to add sidewalk seating or a patio.
 - Increase table turns by simplifying and streamlining the menu. Also look into faster (touchless) bill-pay technologies.
6. **Take stock.** Take care of all the tasks you had carve out time to do for before.
 - Inventory refrigerated, frozen and shelf-stable items.
 - Discard any out-of-date produce, meat or dairy products – consider placing this food in composting bins or areas if at all possible (composting reference added by City)
 - Dump condiments, wash and sanitize containers and refill them.
 - Wash down and sanitize refrigeration units before restocking.
 - Clean and organize shelving and storage areas as well as supplies stored behind counters and neaten up the drive-thru station. Make them look new.
 - Clean and sanitize the ice machine and beverage dispensers and have them serviced.
 - When you plug in equipment and turn on the gas, double-check that everything is working properly.
 - Schedule a preventive maintenance service appointment to tune up all your equipment.
7. **Reorder food, drink and supplies and restart services.** Every other restaurant in your area will be reopening and restocking simultaneously, so allow plenty of time to get deliveries ramped up.
 - Order shelf-stable supplies in advance to stagger resupply.
 - Restart waste disposal service, linen service and any other regular services at the same time that you're ordering supplies.
 - Re-evaluate supply contracts and adjust as needed.
8. **Evaluate your hiring needs.** With fewer covers and, possibly, a simplified menu, your staffing requirements may be different than they were before. Begin, of course, with the people you've kept on the payroll and those who were laid off during the stay-at-home order. But, even in a period of unprecedented high unemployment, some of your old staff may have left town or moved on. You may need to hire new employees — who will also have to be trained before you're up and running again.
9. **Get the word out.** Communicate your plans so customers know you are ready to go.

- Update your website and announce your return on your social media platforms — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on.
 - Offer a special deal or a limited-time online coupon.
 - A festive sign in the window and a few balloons could catch the eyes of passers-by.
 - Consider a direct-mail campaign to neighborhood residents. An ad (with a coupon) in the local shopping circular might be worthwhile, too.
 - Send announcements to TV and radio stations, newspapers and any hyper-local media, such as community websites.
 - Consider a joint “We’re back!” campaign in conjunction with other neighborhood restaurants, bars, theaters and/or shops.
10. **Save every receipt.** You’ll need them all for loan documentation, rent relief, insurance claims and taxes. Track every single expenditure, from special cleaning services to purchase of COVID-19-related gear.

Periodically re-evaluate; what will be your new normal? This is a time to experiment and adjust for both businesses and customers. Figure out what works and what doesn’t. Your business may or may not go back to being exactly what it once was, and either way, it’s fine.

DISCLAIMER

Note: This communication is provided for informational and educational purposes only. It is not intended to convey any specific advice. Furthermore, the recommendations contained here should not be interpreted as setting a standard of care for proper operations. The ultimate judgment regarding the propriety of any re-opening plan must be made by the individual business, in compliance with state and county mandates.

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