

COVID-SAFE PRACTICES: RESTAURANTS

Before COVID-19, restaurants and food service employees kept our restaurants clean and food safe for customers. They are doing the same now, *plus* enhanced work practices recommended by the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

When permitted by the State's Public Health Order, restaurants will be allowed to offer dine-in service under the following requirements.

Required

- Adhere to Required COVID-Safe Practices for All Employers (p. 9).
- Adhere to Required COVID-Safe Practices for Retail Establishments (p. 11).
- Discontinue service stations that require customers to congregate in certain areas or use common utensils/dispensers, including salad bars, buffets and beverage and coffee stations.
- Comply with state Public Health Order limitations on bar and counter seating and non-seated service; and, if otherwise permitted, ensure that six feet or more distance is maintained between customers.
- Establishments that serve alcohol must adhere to required closing time, if applicable, for per the Public Health Order.
- Reservations and private events may not exceed the mass gathering definition and limit per the Public Health Order.
- Ensure patrons are seated at all times. Activities that require standing and congregating are prohibited, including gaming areas, sports and recreational activities, dance floors, bar games, karaoke, and other such activities.
- Live performances may not be ticketed events. Performers must wear masks at all times and maintain social distancing from other performers and patrons. Patrons must remain seated. Live performances do not include karaoke, which is prohibited.
- Employees that handle items used or provided by customers must properly wash their hands or change gloves before serving another customer (e.g. tableware, cutlery, glasses, credit cards, cash, pens, etc.).
- Discontinue allowing pets, excluding service animals, inside the establishment, onto patios, into stores or other such areas.
- Clean and sanitize reusable items such as menus and condiment containers left on tables after each use. If items cannot be cleaned and sanitized after each use, offer single-use items.



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- To support contact tracing, provide all customers who visit the establishment the opportunity to record their name and phone number or email address, along with the date and time of their visit, and retain such records for no less than four weeks from the date of collection.

Additional Requirements for Outdoor Dining Modifications

- Expansions of outdoor service areas must be approved by the appropriate local government agency. If service includes a liquor licensed premises, complete an application for approval through the Alcohol and Beverages Control (ABC) Division, which can be found on their [website](http://rld.state.nm.us/abc) (rld.state.nm.us/abc).
- The area must be open on at least three sides when in use for outdoor dining. Tent sidewalls may be added for security when the facility is not in use.
- Tents may be utilized if approved by the appropriate local government agency.
- Opening a garage door or all windows does not constitute an outdoor dining area.
- Per the Fire Code, open flame or other devices emitting flame, fire or heat or any flammable or combustible liquids, gas, charcoal or other cooking device or any other unapproved devices shall not be permitted inside or located within 20 feet of the tent or membrane structures while open to the public unless approved by the relevant Fire Code Official.

Additional Requirements for Indoor Dining

In order to operate indoor dine-in service, restaurants must adhere to the following additional measures:

- Become New Mexico Safe Certified in Restaurants. To enroll in the program, please visit: nmsafecertified.org. Employees must be retrained within 3 calendar days of any changes to COVID-Safe Practices.
- Maintain contact tracing records for no less than 21 calendar days by recording the date and time, name(s), phone number(s) and email address(es) of all customers who dine on premises (indoor and outdoor). This information must be made available upon the request of the NM Department of Health.
- Screen all employees before they enter the workplace and send employees home who are experiencing COVID symptoms. Allow and coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Health and/or the New Mexico National Guard to test symptomatic employees.



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- Screen all customers as they enter the premises utilizing a COVID questionnaire outlined below (verbally or with a written form). Customers who report COVID symptoms or answer affirmatively to any of the following questions should be denied service. Restaurants are not required to retain health screening information.
 - Have you been directly exposed to someone under investigation for, or with a confirmed case of, COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - Have you experienced any of the following symptoms today, unrelated to a chronic and/or pre-existing condition? (select all that apply)
 - » Fever (100.4 degrees or greater)
 - » Cough (unrelated to seasonal allergies or asthma)
 - » Shortness of Breath (unrelated to seasonal allergies or asthma)
 - » Loss of taste or smell
 - » GI symptoms (vomit, nausea or diarrhea) (unrelated to a chronic condition)
 - » Chills
 - » Shaking chills, otherwise known as rigors
 - » Headache
 - » Muscle pain
 - » Sore throat
 - » Fatigue
 - » Congestion or runny nose (unrelated to seasonal allergies)
 - » None
 - Have you been contacted by the NM Department of Health and/or placed under self-quarantine for COVID-19 for any reason?
 - Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
 - Have you traveled to another state or country in the past 14 days?
 - Have any members of your household traveled to another state or country in the past 14 days?
 - Have you, or a member of your household, traveled by sea (Domestic or International) within the past 14 days?



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Best Practices

- Consider accepting customers on a reservation-only basis.
- When scheduling staff to cover shifts, consider additional breaks to provide for frequent handwashing, more frequent and longer time frames to sanitize equipment, etc.
- Provide single-use items such as plates, cutlery, and napkins to customers and do not leave them in common areas or on tables for self-service.
- Install large plexiglass sneeze guards at cash registers wherever possible.
- Arrange for contactless payment and receipt options to the greatest extent possible.
- Screen employees and customers with a no-contact thermometer; individuals with a temperature reading above 100.4°F should be denied entry.

Additional Resources

- Food and Drug Administration: [Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [New Mexico Food Establishment Reopening Checklist](#)
- [New Mexico Food Program](#)
- [New Mexico Restaurant Association](#)

