

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.
- Discontinue gaming areas and other such areas of the restaurant where customers may congregate for extended periods of time and/or surfaces that are repeatedly touched and cannot be cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- 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.
- 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.



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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.

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 timeframes 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](#)

