



**Wine Institute  
California Winery Tasting Rooms Re-Opening Guidance**

These health and safety protocols for reopening winery tasting rooms are based on established governmental health and safety guidance (CDC, OSHA, FDA, and CDPH). Importantly, Wine Institute consulted with Dr. Petros Karakousis, medical expert in the area of infectious diseases and Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; David Sarvadi, Partner, Keller and Heckman LLP and senior OSHA legal expert; the Wine Institute COVID-19 Health and Safety ad hoc Working Group; members of the Wine Institute Legal Subcommittee; and hospitality representatives from Wine Institute member companies. In addition, we have received extensive input from California regional winery associations and are coordinating content with various state winery trade associations.

## **Education and training:**

### **Tasting rooms **must:****

- Educate employees prior to re-opening to the public on:
  - proper sanitization and personal hygiene requirements consistent with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance
  - importance of not coming to work if sick
  - symptom criteria for COVID-19
- Create and maintain records of employee training on all required health and safety protocols.

### **Tasting rooms **should:****

- Develop educational materials for employees on social distancing and hygiene requirements.
- Develop health and safety guidance for customers on social distancing and hygiene requirements related to tasting room visits.

## **Employee wellness screenings:**

### **Tasting rooms **must:****

- Provide for daily wellness screens of employees following city, county, state, and EEOC guidance on primary symptom checks for COVID-19.
  - [EEOC Guidance](#)
  - [County Guidance](#)
  - At minimum, wellness screens should include the following questions:
  - Have you developed any of the following symptoms:
    - shortness of breath or trouble breathing?
    - cough?
    - fever or feel feverish?
    - any other symptoms that might indicate you are ill?
      - [CDC COVID-19 Symptoms Information](#)
- Follow appropriate privacy requirements when wellness checks are conducted.
  - [Office for Civil Rights Bulletin](#)
  - [HIPPA Bulletin](#)
- Provide a privacy notice to each employee and retain a copy on file.

### **Tasting rooms **should:****

- Consider
  - requiring employees to perform at-home temperature checks and symptom reviews OR
  - performing temperature checks [consistent with CDC guidance](#) daily for employees where appropriate and equipment is available

- Have a process in place to ensure employees who answer yes to any of the wellness screening questions or have a temperature above 100.4° know where to call to get medical advice to evaluate their condition.
- [County by county public health information](#)

### **Employees Sanitization Requirements:**

#### **Tasting rooms must:**

- Minimize employee bare-hand contact with food through use of utensils.
- Reinforce that meticulous hand hygiene (frequent and proper handwashing) is of utmost importance for all employees.
- Use only sanitization materials that are approved for use in contact with food as described on the label.
- Ensure employees wear gloves as required by sanitization material label instructions when performing cleaning, sanitizing, or disinfecting activities. Wearing gloves for activities that might overlap with food handling can foster cross-contamination.
  - When employees use gloves, they must use non-latex gloves and must prevent cross-contamination by replacing gloves after touching faces or changing tasks (e.g., food preparation versus taking out garbage).
- Ensure employees change gloves frequently and at minimum after each break in work activity.

### **Distancing and Occupancy:**

#### **Tasting rooms must:**

- Require that all tasting room visits be by appointment only, until an assessment of guest management social distancing effectiveness can be evaluated.
- Inform customers at time of reservation that face coverings will be required according to county requirements.
- Ensure that all employees and customers wear face coverings consistent with individual county requirements.
  - Customers do not need to wear face coverings while seated at the table once orders have been taken and wine service begins.
- Require employees to maintain a six-foot distance from other employees and customers.
- Configure seating to comply with physical distancing requirements. Ensure tables are spaced at least six feet apart so that distancing of six feet between parties is maintained, including when customers approach or leave tables.
- Place visual cues to ensure people are six feet apart such as, floor markings to ensure customers maintain a six-foot distance while waiting to pay or be seated.
- Post signage as required by individual counties to ensure that customers meet the six-foot distancing requirement.
- Monitor number of customers on premises at one time to ensure physical distancing requirements are maintained and to comply with any capacity restrictions imposed by state and local authorities.

- Limit parties to six people or fewer who have chosen to congregate together. People in the same party seated at the same table do not have to be six feet apart.

**Tasting rooms should:**

- Consider holding outdoor tastings.
  - If any outside areas are tented, all walls and windows that may be opened in the tented area should remain open during service.
- Have contactless payment systems available for payment of all tastings and purchases.
- Provide an adequate number of face coverings for all employees or require employees to bring their own face coverings to work consistent with county order.
- Eliminate all food service, except for prepackaged items such as breadsticks or crackers, during initial phase of opening.

**Operations:**

**Tasting rooms must:**

- Adhere to guidance outlined in this document as well as all applicable statutes and administrative rules to which the business is normally subject.
- Have an established policy regarding refusal of service to customers displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (see symptom information above) and communicate this policy to customers.
- End all on-site consumption of food and drinks, including alcoholic beverages, by 5 p.m.
- Prohibit customer self-service operations.
- Sanitize customer-contact surfaces at tables before and after each tasting, including seats, tables, menus, and all other touch points.
- Frequently sanitize all common areas and touch points, including payment devices.
- Use menus that are single-use, cleanable between customers (laminated), online, or posted on a whiteboard or something similar to avoid multiple contact points.

**Tasting rooms should:**

- Consider requiring customers to sign a waiver of liability at the time of reservation, since currently, there is not adequate testing, contact tracing, effective treatment or a COVID-19 vaccination.
- Assign a designated greeter or host to manage customer flow and monitor distancing while customers are waiting to be seated and during the entering and exiting process.
- Consider use of signage to:
  - inform customers "... if they are displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19 they will be asked to leave." Please note, individual counties may have more specific requirements regarding the use of such signage.
  - list COVID-19 symptoms at the entrance to the facility

- [Symptoms of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Signage](#)
  - inform employees and customers with symptoms that they should stay home
    - [Stop the Spread of Germs Signage](#)
  - inform employees on who to contact if they need assistance
  - Please note, individual counties may have more specific requirements regarding the use of such signage
- Consider staging handwashing or hand sanitizing stations for customer use at the entrance to the tasting area and throughout the tasting area. Hand sanitizer must not replace hand washing by employees.
- Limit the number of staff who serve individual parties. Consider assigning the same employee to each party for entire experience (service, bussing of tables, payment). An employee may be assigned to multiple parties but must practice proper hand hygiene when moving between parties.
- Assign employee(s) to monitor customer access to common areas such as restrooms to assure that customers do not congregate.
- Increase ventilation for indoor spaces to allow for greater air turnover.

## **Important Notice & Disclaimer Concerning Wine Institute Health & Safety Best Practices**

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### **Updating of Health and Safety Protocols**

Users of Wine Institute tasting room reopening protocols should be aware that the information contained may be superseded at any time by the issuance of new editions or may be amended from time to time through the issuance of amendments, updates or corrections. All documents are dated with the date of last revision, information contained in the documents is relevant to the date of last revision.

### **Other Websites**

Additionally, users can find links to other websites and materials in these protocols. While Wine Institute endeavors to provide only links to useful websites, Wine Institute has no control over the content and nature of these other websites and the links to other websites do not imply a recommendation for all of the content found on those sites.

### **Contact Information**

All questions relating to these reopening protocols should be directed to Wine Institute's legal team at [legal@wineinstitute.org](mailto:legal@wineinstitute.org)

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