



Ensuring your customers and employees feel safe – health and safety practices to combat COVID-19

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The Coronavirus 2019 Disease (“COVID-19”) is easily transmitted, especially in group gatherings which often occur in an industry focused on human interaction. In this webinar, we discussed related policies, procedures, and potential sources of risks such as employees, customers, and other person-to-person contact through delivery services (e.g., delivery trucks and off-premise services). Businesses may follow suggested procedures to limit the spread of COVID-19 when they are permitted to conduct in-person operations.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

Operations Plan. An operational plan is a highly detailed plan that provides a clear picture of how your team will contribute to the achievement of the organization’s goals and objectives. The operational plan maps out the day-to-day tasks required to run a business. The plan assists in creating trust for both employees and customers. A designated person should oversee the plan and manual to make updates and address issues when needed.

Operations Manual. The operations manual is the documentation by which an organization provides guidance for its employees to perform their functions correctly and reasonably efficiently. It documents the approved standard procedures for performing operations safely to produce goods and provide services for customers.

Policies and Procedures. All employee and customer policies and procedures should be included in the operations manual. Having policies and procedures lessens errors, ensures safety, and assists with unknown circumstances.

Training. You must train, train, and retrain your employees. The world of COVID-19 changes daily, therefore, your designated operational employee must monitor, and update training procedures as needed.

Keep Records and Record Everything. Keep detailed records and record all steps you have taken to meet COVID guidelines.

Due Diligence. By taking reasonable steps and recording those steps you are doing your due diligence for the health and safety of your customers and employees.

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EMPLOYEE AND CUSTOMER HEALTH AND SAFETY

Business owners are advised to carefully consult with policies and guidelines suggested by CDC, FDA, state, and local health officials, as well as professional associations (e.g., National Restaurant Association and Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association) to advance existing protocols. A written COVID-19 prevention plan allows for a comprehensive assessment of risks involved in work areas. Having a designated person in charge of implementing and responding to any COVID-19 related concerns and incidences should be part of the plan. The designated person should monitor safety measures in consultation with health officials and constantly evolve existing measures.

Before serving customers, businesses should ensure all staff receive safety training. Managers should be prepared to handle employees' that call-in sick through cross-training and develop a roster of trained back-up employees. A list of strategies should be considered to improve employee safety and personal hygiene such as implementing pre-work screenings, identify vulnerable employees for low-human contact duties, taking temperatures, providing PPEs, handwashing protocols, and encouraging stay-home protocols after potential contact per CDC guidelines. Off-premise services should also enforce safety measures while interacting with truck drivers and providing delivery services.

Customer health and safety is the top-priority when businesses are permitted to conduct in person operations. Many states have mandated mask wearing upon entrance to the operation which is also required by the state of Pennsylvania. Businesses are advised to set expectations that customers need to follow with regard to the establishment's policies (e.g., mask wearing, social distancing) when receiving services to ensure a collaborative effort that fosters a safe environment. A list of new measures that allow social distancing include expanding outdoor space, table space, capacity control, signage, and having physical partitions and technological support. For high contact areas, additional steps should be enforced such as frequent disinfecting between customers, providing single use items, and sanitizing products.

MESSAGEING AND CONTACTLESS SERVICES

Hospitality businesses thrive on human interactions and high-touch points to deliver customer experiences. With safety and sanitation being a high priority in the current environment, a new era of ostentatious cleaning and sanitization measures has been ushered in. It is no longer the time to be modest and prudent in order to build customer trust in a business's ability to operate under new guidelines and safety measures. Additionally, customizing and tailoring business messaging is important - there is no one size fits all solution. Multichannel messaging can help communicate pre-arrival safety policies and procedures to guests. Highlight enhanced cleaning and sanitizing standards as well as measures to enforce social distancing and reduced contact between guests and employees. Pre-arrival messaging can provide information on flow of traffic, entrances and exits, or provide contactless initiatives such as new apps, mobile check-in, menus, or digital keys. Providing contactless services is also a viable solution to minimize direct contacts while boosting guest satisfaction.



Shake Example - Using Social Media and Cost-Effective Tools

- Step 1 - Orders placed via direct message in instagram, all staff have access to answer quickly
- Step 2 - Order is confirmed, arrival time and make of car model requested. Order total is given.
- Step 3 - Customer pays via venmo or square on-site
- Step 4 - Staff looks for vehicles near arrival time. Staff make eye contact with customers, gives them a thumbs up and places customer order on the outside table. (Please note, the table has a sign and flowers on it to add to the experience).
- Step 5 - Customer retrieves order from table.

In sum, abiding by guidelines provided by credible sources is critical for businesses to monitor new health and safety measures for contingency operations during pandemic. A list of resources is provided below:

- <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- <https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/restaurant-industry-guidance/>
- <https://go.restaurant.org/covid19-reopening-guide>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html>
- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

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