

Phase II Guidelines for Restaurants

This guidance document describes procedures for restaurants, cafeterias, other food service establishments, and bars (herein referred to as “restaurants” or “establishments”) operating and resuming services in a phased approach in accordance with established guidelines. If you have questions, please contact the Rhode Island Department of Health’s (RIDOH) Center for Food Protection at 401.222.2749 or 401.222.2750.

In addition to the sector-specific guidance outlined here, all businesses are required to comply with the phase II general [business guidance](#) posted on [www.reopeningRI.com](#).

Summary of Phase II operations

In Phase II, restaurants may begin limited indoor dining in addition to outdoor dining (subject to applicable municipal approval) as well as pick-up, delivery, and drive-through operations. This guidance includes guidelines, recommendations, and requirements that will assist establishments in following the general business guidance that is required of all establishments. Establishments are reminded that these guidelines will continue to be updated as additional activities are permitted in future phases of the reopening and in accordance with updates to Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and RIDOH regulations and guidance.

Guidance for On-Premises Dining

- Service to standing customers (e.g. in a bar area) is prohibited with the exception of food pick-up where standards for pick-up referenced below in the *Guidance for Pick-up, Drive-through, and Delivery* section are followed. This includes six feet of physical distance between individuals in pick-up and waiting areas.
- Establishments should prevent customer access to potential gathering spaces on the premises (e.g. dance floors, courtyards). Customer seating anywhere other than at tables or designated seating areas of a bar is prohibited.
- An establishment’s indoor dining capacity is limited to 50% of an establishment’s regular seating capacity.
- Outdoor dining is still encouraged as long as the restaurant does not service more than its normal operating capacity and physical distancing can be maintained. Additionally, if an establishment has established extra outdoor dining capacity in Phase I, that additional outdoor capacity may remain in Phase II if the municipality continues to approve such additional capacity (in accordance with the municipality’s approval processes).
- Establishments are reminded of the State’s general guidance regarding physical distancing which reads that “All persons should remain at least six (6) feet apart at all times. If social distancing is not feasible, individuals must minimize time in violation of social distancing, and additional precautions should be taken. Procedures that cannot be executed with social distancing should be documented by businesses and organizations in the written COVID-19 Control Plan required.”
- The maximum party size is fifteen in accordance with the Executive Order on social gathering size for Phase II. Customers are strongly encouraged to minimize the size of their

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party, to minimize the number of non-household members they dine with, and to keep their party to eight people or fewer. Additionally, no more than eight customers are allowed at a single table. Parties of eight or more customers are recommended to be seated at two or more separate tables, and it is recommended strongly that restaurants seat such larger parties outdoors, where possible. Restaurants may also choose not to allow larger parties.

- It is recommended that, to the extent possible, establishments maximize spacing between individuals.
- Restaurants are recommended to help prevent socializing or mixing between tables or between different parties.
- Tables must:
 - Be separated by at least eight feet from table edge to table edge or to allow six feet spacing between seated customers at different tables; and
 - Be at least six feet away from areas with regular customer foot traffic (e.g. routes to bathrooms, entrances, and exits).
 - Tables may be closer together if physical, non-porous barriers (e.g. Plexiglas, plastic glass, etc.) of an appropriate height (tall enough to fully separate seated customers) are installed between tables.
- Bar seating is permitted, provided that either:
 - There are no active work areas or working staff behind the bar; or
 - There is a physical barrier (e.g. Plexiglas) separating customers from the bar space.In addition, parties must be seated at bars (no service to standing customers), and parties must be spaced at least six feet from other parties.
- Establishments should demarcate physical distancing spaces in waiting areas and indicate customer traffic flows with tape or paint on the floor as well as with signage.
- In order to facilitate physical distancing among staff, establishments should consider:
 - Staggering employee shifts and break times;
 - Cohorting staff within each shift (i.e. keeping the same shift schedules and avoiding mixing staff across shifts);
 - Designating separate work zones for servers; and
 - Spacing workstations and personnel positioning by six feet, when practicable; and
- Eliminating or minimizing the use of shared equipment.
- Establishments should consider designating separate entrances and exits for customers, where practicable, to promote one-way customer traffic.
- For bathrooms:
 - Establishments should make adjustments to promote physical distancing within bathrooms (alternating stalls, sinks, etc.), or take other steps as is practicable (including the posting of signage).
 - Establishments should clean commonly touched surfaces in restrooms (e.g. toilet seats, doorknobs, stall handles, sinks, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers) with increased frequency and in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Self-service seating (e.g. in a fast food restaurant) is prohibited. Staff may designate tables for customers (e.g. by table number) upon checkout, as long as the establishment ensures that tables are cleaned between customers and that customers sit only in areas that permit physical distancing.

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- Online and phone reservations are strongly encouraged. If online and phone reservations cannot be implemented, outdoor reservation or host stations for taking in-person reservations and receiving customers are strongly recommended as an alternative.
- Upon arriving at the premises for dining, the establishment should ensure that parties are directed to their table in a manner that respects physical distancing guidelines.
- All self-service food stations where meals need to be assembled by the customer (e.g. salad bars and buffets) are prohibited.
- Condiments and similar products (e.g. salt, pepper, ketchup, mustard, salad dressing) should only be provided via single-servings (e.g. individual packages or cups) unless provided upon request and sanitized between each use.
- Establishments must use one of the following:
 - Paper menus that are immediately disposed after each use;
 - Digital, electronic, whiteboard, or chalkboard menus; or
 - Reusable menus that are sanitized after each use.
- Utensils and dishware used for table service must either be disposable and discarded between parties or be removed, sanitized, and replaced between parties. Utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Self-service drink refills are not allowed. Any drink refill must use clean dishware (sanitized between use) or new.
- Establishments should consider increasing ventilation with outdoor air circulation in kitchens and other indoor areas (e.g. food prep areas), when safe, practicable, and in alignment with food safety regulations.
- Servers, bartenders, bussers, and other customer-facing staff should minimize time spent within six feet of customers and other staff.
- Establishments must maintain an employee work log and retain the names and contact information of at least one member of each party dining in the restaurant for a period of at least 30 days and make this information available to RIDOH, upon request, for the purposes of contact tracing.
- Live performances are allowed, provided that there is 14 feet of physical distance between performers and from tables and high-traffic areas.
- Restaurants are encouraged to adopt a policy of no smoking/no vaping in outdoor dining areas.

Where not specified above, all organizations should follow the general guidance from RIDOH and CDC regarding gathering sizes and physical distancing. Please refer to the general guidance document for businesses and organizations that is posted on <http://www.reopeningri.com/>

Guidance for Pick-up, Drive-through, and Delivery

Establishments should follow the [FDA guidelines for pick-up, drive-through, and delivery operations](#) that are posted on FDA's website.

In addition to applicable guidance for on-premise dining, restaurants providing pick-up, drive-through, and delivery should take the following steps to assist customers with physical distancing:

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- Encourage customers to place orders online or by phone.
- Offer curbside pick-up (i.e. not allowing customers indoors) where practicable.
- Demarcate six-foot spacing in any lines (e.g. by using tape and/or with signage, rope/belt stanchions, or other methods).
- Demarcate a six-foot distance between each pick-up or payment location (e.g. counter, table, register).
- Demarcate a six-foot distance between the waiting line for customers and any pick-up or payment locations.
- Close any waiting areas and demarcate six-foot spacing for pick-up lines. Establishments may use the non-critical retail guidance (one customer per 150 square feet of floor area) as a general rule for determining how many customers should be allowed in a space at a time for takeout operations.
- Establishments are encouraged to install physical, non-porous barriers (e.g. Plexiglas, plastic glass) in accordance with standards established by RIDOH at key points of customer interaction (e.g. pick-up areas, payment stations).

Payment

- Establishments should encourage contactless and/or cashless payment methods where feasible.
- Establishments should encourage staff handling customer transactions to wash their hands with increased frequency.
- To the extent customer contact is required in processing transactions (e.g. entering a PIN number, signing a receipt), the establishment should take special measures to ensure contacted areas (e.g. payment devices, pens, cardholders) are sanitized frequently (e.g. after each use).

Screening procedures

- RIDOH requires that food establishments screen employees, customers, and visitors entering an establishment. People whose responses to screening questions indicate that they are COVID-19 positive, sick, or who show visible signs of illness, must be denied entrance and instructed to isolate. Employers may supplement screening questions with temperature checks. Please review the [general business guidance](#) for more details on screening. Screening of customers and visitors may consist of self-screening as guided by posted signage.
- In addition to screening for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors as outlined in the general guidance, restaurants should inform customers, when they make a reservation, of screening requirements and should notify customers that they should not dine at the restaurant if any member of their party does not meet screening standards. This notification can be done by phone, text, email, or verbally.

Face masks and other personal protective equipment

- In furtherance of the requirement that all employees, customers, and members of the general public must wear face coverings/masks when physical distance cannot be easily, continuously, and measurably maintained, customers are required to wear face masks when entering or exiting the restaurant, when in a common area (e.g. hallway or restroom) or

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when otherwise traveling within or through the restaurant. Face masks can be removed by customers when dining.

- Establishments are permitted to establish their own facial covering policy pertaining to customers when they are dining, provided that such policy is in addition to, and not in conflict with, the State's policy and complies with other applicable law.

Enhanced cleaning and/or disinfecting procedures

- Prior to reopening, an establishment must conduct a thorough cleaning of the facility, including all dining, kitchen, bathroom, and commonly-touched surfaces.
- Dining tables fall into the category of frequently touched surfaces, and restaurants must clean each table, chair, and other commonly touched surfaces related to that table in accordance with CDC guidelines and between parties.
- Establishments must make hand-washing facilities (with running soap and water) or hand sanitizer available to all employees and customers. Hand sanitizer should be made available at the establishment's entrances and exits, as well as in dining areas, when practicable.
- Establishments must clean bathrooms, pick-up locations, payment stations, and other commonly-touched or customer-facing areas in accordance with the CDC guidelines documented in the general business guidelines.
- Establishments should remind employees of pre-existing food safety regulations, healthy handwashing practices, and the importance of regular cleaning.

Implementing Guidance

- Establishments must designate an employee to implement and monitor for compliance with physical distancing measures, sanitization, and other standards included in this guidance. This employee may be the Food Safety Manager; however, establishments may designate an alternate employee.
- Establishments must institute employee training programs on these standards.
- Establishments should post signage, visible to customers, that communicates expected physical distancing, face coverings, and customer screening policies.

Additional resources

Establishments should also consult the following resources:

- [National Restaurant Association's COVID-19 Reopening Guidance](#)
- [CDC's Considerations for Restaurants and Bars](#)
- [FDA's Best Practices](#)
- [FDA's Reopening Guidance](#)