

# WEST VIRGINIA STRONG

## *The Comeback*

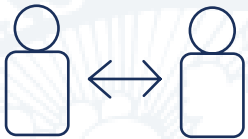


A Guide to Safely  
Opening Restaurants and Bars

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## A Guide to Safely Opening Restaurants and Bars

Under Gov. Justice's reopening plan, **West Virginia Strong — The Comeback**, restaurants and bars may open indoor facilities at 50% capacity, as well as offering outdoor service and take-away and delivery service. Governor Justice has issued the following guidance to mitigate the exposure and spread of COVID-19 among food-service workers and patrons. These guidelines, in addition to the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), will help West Virginians transition back to safe dining outside of their homes. Businesses are allowed and encouraged to implement more stringent protocols as they see fit.



As your business reviews and implements these new measures, we encourage you to share and discuss them with your employees and your customers. Communicating enhanced cleaning and sanitization practices will make workers and patrons feel more confident in your restaurants.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in suspension of a restaurant's or bar's license to operate or its ABCA license, as applicable, and/or other appropriate enforcement measures.

**Please note:** The following guidelines replace and supersede all previously issued state guidance with respect to restaurants and bars.

## A GUIDE TO SAFELY OPENING RESTAURANTS AND BARS

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

- **Indoor seating capacity:** Limit indoor occupancy to 50% of seating capacity.
- **Bar:** Bar seating should be spaced to maintain at least six (6) feet of distance between patrons who reside or arrive.
- **Spacing:** Update floor plans for common dining areas, redesigning seating arrangements to ensure at least six (6) feet of separation from seating-to-seating. Spacing requirements also apply to outdoor dining areas. Clear paths must be designed to allow patrons to enter and exit the outdoor dining area without breaking the six (6) feet social-distancing barriers.
- **Party type:** Enforce social distancing for those not residing together while present on such entity's leased or owned property.
- **ABCA Regulations:** To facilitate restaurants looking to expand outdoor dining, the West Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Administration has developed a streamlined process with no fees for a restaurant to temporarily expand their floor space to include new or expanded outdoor dining space. To view the policy, click [here](#).
- **Waiting areas:** Do not allow patrons to congregate in waiting areas. Design a process to ensure patron separation while waiting to be seated or pick up their take-away order; the process can include ground markings, distancing, or waiting in cars.
- **Separate entrances:** If possible, use an exit from the facility separate from the entrance.
- **Limitations:** No live music, and all restaurant or dining room playgrounds shall remain closed.
- **Vendors:** Remind third-party delivery drivers and any suppliers of distancing requirements.

### REDUCING CONTACT

- **Establish clear paths:** Mark ingress/egress to and from restrooms to establish paths that mitigate proximity for patrons and staff.
- **Limit contact with guests:** Limit contact between workers and patrons by reducing the number of visits wait staff takes to each table.
- **Reservations:** Where practical, implement a call-ahead seating model.
- **Menus:** The use of non-touch or disposable paper menus discarded after each patron use is strongly encouraged. If not feasible, reusable menus should be cleaned and sanitized between use.

### OPERATIONS & EMPLOYEE PROTOCOL

- **Screen employees:** Screen all employees reporting to work daily for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature checks:** Employees are encouraged to take their temperature prior to leaving for work. If their temperature measures over 100 degrees, the employee should notify management and not return to work that day and any future days when the temperature is over 100 degrees.

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- **Sick employees:** Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **At-risk individuals:** Consider special accommodations for employees that are members of a vulnerable population, like senior citizens or immunocompromised people, including encouraging teleworking to the maximum extent possible among other measures.
- **Tracing:** Develop and implement policies and procedures for employee contact tracing following employee with a positive COVID-19 test and inform the local health department of such positive test and tracing.
- **Training:** Train all employees on the importance and expectation of increased frequency of handwashing and the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol; provide clear instruction to avoid touching hands to face.
- **Face coverings:** Employees must wear cloth or disposable face coverings to the greatest extent possible. Such coverings shall be cleaned or replaced daily. Employers should consider special accommodations for employees when working over high heat.
- **Preparation:** Thoroughly detail, clean, and sanitize the entire facility prior to resuming dine-in services and continue to do so regularly, focusing such cleaning and sanitation on high contact areas that would be touched by employees and patrons.
- **Cleaning solutions:** Cleaning products and protocols shall include EPA-approved disinfectants that meet CDC requirements for use and effectiveness against viruses, bacteria and other airborne and bloodborne pathogens. For more information, please refer to the CDC guidelines on disinfecting buildings and facilities.
- **Sanitizing between each customer:** Between diners, clean and sanitize table condiments, digital ordering devices, check presenters, self-service areas, tabletops and bar tops, chairs and commonly touched areas. Discard any single-use items left by the last patron.
- **Back-of-house cleaning:** Implement procedures to increase cleaning and sanitizing frequency of surfaces in the back-of-house. Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants.
- **Restroom cleaning:** Clean and sanitize restrooms regularly, check restrooms based on the frequency of use, and ensure adequate supply of soap and paper towels at all times.
- **Hand sanitizers:** Provide hand sanitizer for use by patrons, including contactless hand sanitizing stations when available. If hand sanitizer is unavailable, ensure an adequate supply of hand soap is available for patrons.

## FOOD SAFETY

- **Disposable plates and utensils:** The use of disposable containers and utensils is strongly encouraged. If disposable utensils are not available, silverware must be pre-rolled. Eliminate table presets.
- **Trash bins:** Where restaurants use disposable containers and utensils, restaurants must place designated trash bins where patrons can dispose of all trash at the completion of their meal to minimize contact with wait staff. Bins should be placed in areas that do not create lines for patrons practicing proper social distancing.
- **Beverages:** Drinks should be served in cans or bottles. If cans or bottles are not available, disposable cups are strongly encouraged.
- **No buffets:** Do not offer self-serve salad bars or buffets in indoor or outdoor dining areas.
- **Self-service Drinks:** Self-service beverages are permitted, and all equipment and/or materials for self service should be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
- **Grab & go coolers:** If providing a “grab and go” service, stock coolers to no more than minimum levels.

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### COMMUNICATING WITH CUSTOMERS

- **Post signage:** Post signage on entrances that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is permitted at the facility.
- **Install barriers:** Where practicable, physical barriers such as partitions or plexiglass at cash registers or ordering windows should be used.
- **Use technology:** Use technological solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction: mobile ordering, mobile access to menus to plan in advance, text on arrival for seating, and contactless payment options.

In addition to the specific guidelines for West Virginia food service personnel above, businesses and their employees should be mindful of the more general guidance issued for small businesses, found at [governor.wv.gov](https://governor.wv.gov).

