



# ≡ BC RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION COVID-19 BEST BACK OF HOUSES PRACTICES FOR OPEN AND CLOSED KITCHENS



The British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association is a dedicated resource to help restaurateurs grow and succeed in business in our province.

# BEST BACK OF HOUSES PRACTICES FOR OPEN AND CLOSED KITCHENS

## → BE SAFE: SEE SAFE.

Staff and customers want to see operators operating differently. Heightened health and safety procedures and the standardization protocols are at the core of success in determining best practices for Back of House. Common sense and increased awareness around safety should be considered for all styles of kitchens and back of house operations.

Mandatory hand washing when entering the kitchen is the first step. Having employees change into work clothes before starting a kitchen shift is a solid best practice. This can mean putting on a chef coat or changing into a separate t-shirt and apron.

Posting up to date signage on proper kitchen sanitizing and setting timers for hand washing remind staff that we are in a COVID-19 period and help set a tone of vigilance. Having staff use a designated set of knives or hand tools for staff per shift will ensure that there are less touches between team members.

Be mindful of updated regulations from relevant departments of health to ensure that your team are following best practices in preparing food.

Involve your team in your Back of House plan as all team members may have ideas and innovations that will provide thoughtful solutions in this unusual climate. In determining your unique BOH plan make sure it includes written information of all preventative measures being undertaken by your restaurant and outline the steps that should be taken in certain scenarios. Once you have created the plan, ensure that all teams members are aware of the new processes and are trained on implementation.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR ENTERING THE KITCHEN:

- Mandatory hand washing when entering the kitchen and before changing.
- Stagger starting time so that staff aren't all arriving at the same time and crowding entrances or bathrooms for changing.

- Recommended off hour prep shifts to limit number of employees in the kitchen at one time.
- Commit to having only healthy people working at all times.

### Ideas to achieve this include:

- Daily temperature check for all employees when clocking in (maximum temperature allowed is 37.5° C; anything above this employee is deemed unsafe to work).
- Have staff complete a brief health questionnaire to be filled out by all returning staff after re-hire, stating last 14 days, if they traveled, and/or have shown any signs of Covid-19.
- Employees should wear distinct kitchen uniforms and/or work clothes (can include t-shirts, etc., but no street clothing to be worn in the kitchen, this includes shoes).
- Recommended that hats and/or hairnets and beard nets (*where applicable*).
- Limit the number of people who aren't cooks and chefs entering the kitchen area. This includes deliveries, service technicians and sales people.
- For any deliveries that would normally enter the kitchen, create a staging area for deliveries outside of the kitchen. Where possible, unbox items before bringing them into the kitchen.

## WORK IN TEAMS:

- Create work “bubbles”: Try to reduce the number of people that each staff member connects with on a weekly basis. If you have two shifts each day, have the same people on the first shift and the same people on the second shift. This increases employee confidence.
- Ensure that there are reduced touches between kitchen and serving and kitchen and cleaning teams.
- For dishes, when possible, have the cleaning team come and collect dirty dishes from cooks rather than having cooks come to the dish area.
- For serving, using pass-thrus or creating temporary service pass-thrus to reduce kitchen traffic will increase staff confidence.
- When pass-thru service isn't possible, mark entrance and exits to kitchen areas to reduce contact between service and dishes being cleared.
- Limit access to food preparation areas by delivery agents. Have one dedicated person per shift bring supplies into kitchen or storerooms.



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## BEST PRACTICES FOR TRAINING:

- Recommend that all kitchen teams complete a fresh training or orientation on new Covid-19 procedures prior to returning to work.
- Post all documents listing requirements for high and low temp ware washing, chemical amount testing, fridge and freezer temperatures to reinforce current standards.
- All equipment temperatures to be checked and tracked twice daily. These are currently required but should be reinforced to heighten safe practices.
- Review the brand specific sanitizer or cleaner instructions to make sure you are following the usage instructions. Some brands vary from 20 seconds to 60 seconds or longer.

## ADDITIONAL CLEANING, HAND WASHING AND PPE:

- Recommended mandatory 30-minute timers to remind all food handlers to wash their hands for best practices. This serves as a reminder to staff of the COVID-19 new normal.
- Use of gloves:
  - optional for service line workers (if used must be changed in 30-minute intervals, or same as hand washing cycle)
  - Gloves recommended for cold food preparation and cold plating.
  - Gloves mandatory when handling deliveries and receiving raw food product and must be changed frequently or after each task.
- Recommended kitchen and prep areas are wiped down in 30-minute intervals with approved sanitizer. This should especially include all repeated contact surfaces such as fridge and door handles, drawers and faucet handles.
- Best practices would also include changing kitchen utensils regularly throughout service or during prep time.
- If possible, chefs and cooks should not share knives, utensils or service tools. If shared, they should be cleaned/sanitized between users.
- If your business has a shift change, consider an additional intentional kitchen clean at the time of that change of personnel.
- In the dishwashing area, all employees should wear gloves and masks or face shields. The dishwashing area should be clearly divided into “Clean End,” “Dirty End” so dishwashers are not loading clean dirty and then removing clean to cross-contamination. Best practices in bigger kitchens should be two dishwashers; 1 handling dirty and 1 handling clean. Recommended that water is changed frequently, and no other kitchen staff handles dirty dishes.

- Recommended receiving/delivery log mandatory. This should include date, time, company and signed by employee receiving the orders. Records should be kept up to 1 month.
- Post at all sinks in kitchens and staff washrooms hand washing instructions.

## PREPARATION AND COOKING:

- Use single use, compostable spoons or cutlery stored in approved sanitizing baths for tasting product. One assigned taster is preferable.
- Adjust or streamline menus and dishes so less finishing tasting is required during service.
- Observe social distancing whenever possible, i.e. when in the walk-in fridges/freezers, dry storage area, during staff meetings, staff meals, receiving orders, large prep jobs, etc. Best practices would include posted limits of staff allowed in the change room, walk-in cooler/freezer, and dry storage at the same time. Could include signs and/or markers on the door to indicate it is currently occupied.
- Post directional signs for high traffic areas to keep a steady flow of people going in one area and coming out the other.
- Create distance between prep areas and/or workstations.
- During service, limit staff working alongside each other too closely and observing social distancing protocols whenever possible.
- Team working in an open kitchen may want to invest in masks, as the guest scrutiny of visible practices will be heightened.



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## DAILY END OF SERVICE:

- Post-nightly kitchen cleaning schedule.
- Kitchen should be deep cleaned and sanitized after each service and/or nightly. Focus on all contact surfaces, high use areas and equipment, recommended sanitizers, etc.
- Once tasks are complete, inspected and signed off by a supervisor or manager on duty and logged.

## ADDITIONAL STAFF SUPPORTS:

- Talk to employees about best practices for overall physical and mental health, especially during early stages of reopening and while outside the workplace.
- Reinforce the fact that we need to look after each other and stay safe and that actions outside of the workplace can have an effect on the entire team especially during early phases of reopening.
- Remind staff that all personal connections travel back with them to the workplace and ask them to be respectful of other staff.
- Talk to your staff if they have more than one job. See if you can work with them to provide them more hours at one location to reduce their number of “connections” and the number of “connections” they bring to your business.
- Suggest local resources, parks and activities to help with stress.
- Health Authority Covid-19 guidelines do not make wearing a mask and gloves mandatory. However, public trust may be enhanced when the restaurant team are wearing masks and gloves so decide on when and where you use them and do so consistently.
- If masks are to be used, then they must be used correctly. That means they are not adjusted, pulled, down, or touched at all during service shifts. A mask is contaminated and rendered useless quickly if touched repeatedly. Customers will be observing service teams, and there is already anecdotal evidence that customers have greater confidence if restaurant staff wear masks, and that they are not touched. Make sure the mask is secure when it is first put on so that no adjustments need to be made.