



≡ BC RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION COVID-19 BEST FRONT OF HOUSE SERVICE PRACTICES



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

COVID-19 BEST FRONT OF HOUSE SERVICE PRACTICES

→ BE SAFE: SEE SAFE.

Staff and customers want to see operators operating differently. Having a dedicated service spot at each table will assist with comfort of staff and guests. We recommend either a service space at the table or a service corridor with your floor plan – these dedicated spaces should be kept clear for service throughout the meal.

Standing pose should be slightly back from the table. Emphasizing comfort of guest and staff, serving with outstretched arms, rather than physical body, is a best practice. All effort should be made by servers to place menus, cutlery rolls, glasses, and dishes carefully and efficiently, and stand back when speaking with customers. For table touches, be considerate and aim to reduce the number of people who visit each table.

Involve your team in your service plan as all team members may have ideas and innovations that will provide thoughtful solutions in this unusual climate. In determining your unique service 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 WORKSPACE:

- Mandatory hand washing when entering the building from service doors.
- Have a hand sanitizing station for guests and staff when they enter the front door to immediately clean hands.
- Stagger starting time so that staff aren't all arriving at the same time and crowding entrances or bathrooms for changing.
- 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 37.50 C; anything above this employee is deemed unsafe to work).
 - Have all staff complete a brief health questionnaire stating that they understand and agree not to work

if they or anyone they live with has COVID-19, have been exposed, have any symptoms or are subject to quarantine because of travel or other exposure to COVID-19.

- When possible, have a hostess open the front door for staff and guests when arriving on the property. This will show an investment in sanitation, as less people will be touching the front door.
- Waiting inside the restaurant for a table should be discouraged. Waiting outside or in cars is preferable. Ask guest for a number to text when the table is ready.

WORK IN TEAMS:

- Create work “bubbles”: Set up work teams so front of house and back of house teams work together and limit their interaction with additional folks. 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 serving and kitchen and serving and clearing/cleaning teams.
- For dishes, when possible, have the clearing/cleaning team come and collect dirty dishes rather than having the server collect dirty dishes.
- If you have a patio, allow team members to do part of their shift outside on a patio and part inside in the dining room. People are confident in an open air environment and this may help increase server confidence as well.



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BEST PRACTICES FOR ORIENTATION & TRAINING:

- Have personal conversations with all of your front of house team members when you are ready to bring them back to work. Ask them about their concerns and work to address their concerns and speak directly to the increased health and safety practices being put into place in your operation.
- Consider having a Zoom restart meeting with all of your team to get them excited about working together and address key questions brought up during individual phone calls.
- Recommend that all serving teams complete a fresh training or orientation on new Covid-19 procedures prior to returning to work.
- Determine if you can create new guidelines and signage for entering, exiting, queuing, and seating that will help both staff and guests with traffic flow.
- Focus on separating staff roles into those who touch prepared food versus those who touch dirty dishes, cutlery, and glassware.
- Review the brand specific sanitizer or cleaner instructions. Make sure your teams are following the usage instructions. Some brands vary from 20 seconds to 60 seconds or longer.
- Consider bringing back your guest book at the hostess station and record the name of one guest and their phone number for each party. This will help with tracking guests and will help with outdoor waiting. Keeping contacts for 1 month is listed in the Public Health Order.
- Transparency: Talk to all of your staff about your expectations and the new work environment. Make sure they understand the process and know who they can go to for questions or concerns. Sometimes having someone to answer a question makes the difference.
- When possible, natural airflow increases confidence of guests. Open windows or open blinds to make space feel open and airy.
- Communicate your plan of action to both customers and employees. Reassure them that you are reopening with heightened hygiene and cleanliness standards.
- Communicate through group chat pre-shift or patio pre-shift rather than in a back corridor or kitchen.
- Note: buffets or self-service are currently NOT permitted.
- Use floor decals to help remind staff and guests about 2 m physical distancing.
- Respect physical distancing from guests and other staff when possible:
 - Respectfully cease to offer hand-to-hand contact with guests (handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, etc.)

- Ensure that patrons be able to maintain a distance of two metres from one another, unless they are in the same party, and from staff;
- Maintain respectful distance from coworkers and avoid additional points of physical contact between team members.
- Teams should be encourage to create separate take-out and dine-in protocols:
 - Create a separate workflow for take-out that does not impact dine-in guests with a separate door or path to payment/pickup if possible.
 - Introduce clear signage for take-out versus dine-in.

ADDITIONAL CLEANING, HAND WASHING AND PPE:

- Recommended reception desk and front door handles are wiped down in 30-minute intervals with approved sanitizer.
- Between customers, tables, chairs, menus, tablets, coat hooks and any condiments that have been brought to the table must be cleaned or sanitized between parties. This maintains cleanliness and will provide comfort to other diners in the restaurant who witness the cleaning process.
- For counter service, POS machines should be sanitized between patrons who must touch the number pad.
- When staff switch positions, any shared equipment should be sanitized. This should especially include all repeated contact surfaces such as computer terminals, keyboards, POS machines.
- Remove everything from the table after guests leave and clean the table completely.
- Post at all sinks in kitchens and staff washrooms hand washing instructions.
- Staff should perform regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds following the official handwashing guidelines. It is suggested that handwashing be done:
 - Before and after breaks
 - After touching or cleaning tables any surfaces that may be contaminated
 - After sneezing, coughing or nose blowing
 - After touching your face or hair
 - After using the restroom
 - After touching personal phones
 - After using shared equipment such as computers, POS systems and debit terminals between different users

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TABLE SIDE SERVICE IDEAS:

- **Service Disks:** To reduce the number of touches between servers and guests, consider implementing service disks. Give each table a disc with a Green and a Red side. If the green side is up, the guests are requesting service and if it is red, they are fine. Reduces touches and table checks.
- **Aprons:** Encourage staff to have an apron that allows the server to have an extra layer between their clothes and the guest. This protects the server's clothes and still looks professional. They take the apron off before they go home and either they or the employer washes it before the next day.
- **Have servers leave drinks or food at the front of the table and let the guests take them after the server has stood back.**
- **Consider leaving the menu at the table instead of having servers remove them mid-meal.** If this is not feasible, suggest the busser grab the menu when they clear the first time.
- **For water service, provide water in a bottle or jug at the table and allow guests to pour their own water.**
- **For coffee service, do not touch cups when refilling.**
- **Remove salt and pepper shakers, sauce dispensers, candles, and other table top items.** Provide if requested and replace with thoroughly cleaned and sanitized ones. Consider single-use options.
- **For leftovers, provide the guest with the container and let them pack the to-go box.**



NEW MENU IDEAS:

- **Signboards, Digital Signage & Chalk Boards:** In full service, increase use of chalk boards or feature boards for items like daily specials, wine list, beer information, feature cocktails so that you don't have to produce a drinks list and provide more items that must be cleaned regularly.
- **Consider recyclable menus:** Could be like dim-sum menus where you circle what you want and submit it.
- **Menu limiting:** In full service, start your offering with a limited menu and suggested pairings (offer both beer and wine or wine and cocktail or mocktail) so that you are reducing the choices and the touches as a result. In this case, a feature menu with pairings could change daily using the paper menu concept. This could also be a win for social media marketing.
- **In counter service, determine whether technology can reduce contacts.**
 - Increase use of Digital Menus Boards or online pre-ordering alternatives if appropriate.
 - Enable and encourage tap or mobile payment methods.

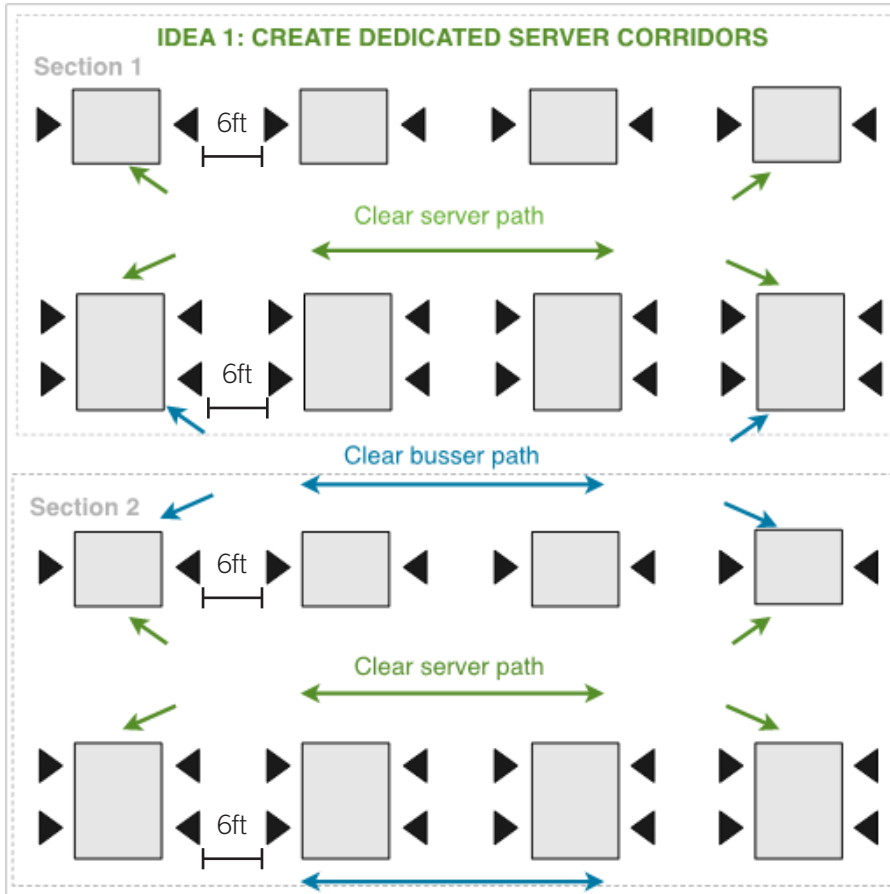
IDEAS FOR REDUCED TOUCHES ON GUEST PLATES:

- **Consider turning bars into service or pass through counters:** In this scenario, the kitchen teams delivers dishes to the bar area and the servers pick up from there. Reduces touches and reduces traffic into the kitchen. Think old fashion diner.
- **When pass-thru service isn't possible, mark entrance and exits to kitchen areas to reduce contact between service and dishes being cleared.**
- **Consider employing traditional server practices:**
 - Hold plates underneath with the thumb on the rim.
 - Use the cup handle to place cups on tables.
 - Use the stem to carry wine glasses.
 - Grip utensils by the handle and don't let handles touch the food. Remember to keep your hands off the bowl of a spoon or prongs of a fork.

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IDEAS FOR CHANGING FRONT OF HOUSE LAYOUT FOR REDUCED TOUCHES:

- Create walkways for servers: Seat tables with guests facing each other only E-W or N-S, leaving open pathways with no chairs for servers and bussers to use for service.



- Remove 1 chair per table: Designate a specific place for the server to come to the table, similar to the open side on a booth. This ensures that they don't have to squeeze in between patrons.

