



# ≡ BC RESTAURANT AND FOODSERVICES ASSOCIATION COVID-19 BEST BEVERAGE SERVICE PRACTICES IN FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS



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

# BEST BEVERAGE SERVICE PRACTICES IN FULL SERVICE RESTAURANTS

## → 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 glasses, present menus and dishes carefully and efficiently, and stand back when speaking with customers. For table touches, one person should serve and one person should clear – be considerate and aim to reduce the number of people who visit each table.

In the case that your restaurant has a bar area where drinks are poured, reduce the number of customers that are near the bar to increase the working space and confidence of bar and service team.

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 team members are aware of the new processes and are trained on implementation, and sign off on it.

## WATER SERVICE:

- No glassware to be pre-placed on tables.
- After guests seated, water glasses to be placed on edge of the table.
- Water bottle/carafe to be placed on edge of table; guests can self-pour from bottles or jugs.
- Replenish using fresh bottle or water jug.



## 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 service team and clearing team.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO CREATE YOUR “NEW NORMAL” WINE/BEER/BEVERAGE LIST:

- White boards/chalk boards/signboards to post beverage offerings avoids the use of single use paper menus.
- Single page laminated lists that can be sanitized thoroughly between guests.
- Single use printed page, double sided that can be recycled.
- Digital Wine/Beverage List readily available on restaurant’s website or app so that guests can access with their own devices.

*Note:* Consider shortening your core wine lists or beverage lists, specifically by-the-glass, for ease of service and reduced touches to coincide with reopening. With a condensed offering, servers, sommeliers and/or wine directors can have most of the beverage selections memorized and can make recommendations/sales beyond the shortened list.

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## PRESENTING THE WINE/BEVERAGE LIST:

- Ask guests when they arrive whether they want the Wine/Beverage list and provide it with the menu to reduce touches with guests.
- Feature food menus with suggested wine/beer/cocktail pairings is a great way to enhance the dining experience and reduce the number of touches.
- When asking about selections or answering questions about offerings, stand back from the table but lean in or reach in as required.
- Once beverages are selected, wine list should be put on edge of table for pick up and/or disposal.
- Discretion should be exercised if a customer requests a seeing a long list. Restaurants with very long lists could maintain one full list by segmenting pages by category (sparkling red, white, rosé, dessert), laminate each page, and have on hand for such occasions.
- If you have an extensive wine list, PDFing and posting your list online is a good option. Adding a QR code that links directly to the wine list will reduce touches.

## PREPARING THE TABLE FOR BEVERAGE SERVICE:

- No glassware will be pre-placed on the table.
- Once wine/beverage order is taken, pre-polished glasses should be placed on edge of table. Be aware of using outstretched arm instead of getting physically close.
- Glasses are ONLY to be touched by stem or base; if stemless then hold as close to bottom of glass as possible.
- If a tray is to be used it must be thoroughly sanitized before and after each use. Suggest having two sets of trays: 1 set for bringing clean items to the table and 1 set for removing items from the table.

## RETRIEVING BOTTLES FROM THE CELLAR/FRIDGE; PRESENTING THE BOTTLE PROTOCOLS:

- Bottles retrieved from cellar, stock room, wine fridge should be touched sparingly avoiding the neck area; single use washable napkin for holding the bottle is recommended to give additional buffer.
- Do not cradle bottles close to the torso.
- Bottle can be presented with an outstretched arm for authentication.

## BOTTLE OPENING PROTOCOL:

- Ideally bottles are to be opened on a sanitized service station and NOT the guest's table.
- If there is room, a beverage service station (prepped with clean mise-en-place such as fresh single use cloth napkins, ice-buckets, wine coasters etc.) that is consistently sanitized is a good option. Servers should wash hands before coming to the service station or collecting decanters.
- Corkscrew, beer opener or any equipment such as decanting funnel to be dedicated to individual servers for a shift and then cleaned or sanitized before and after use.
- Server/sommelier should not pre-taste or pre-nose the wine unless requested/approved to do so by the guest.
- Take care to cut capsule and remove cork. Cork will not be offered to host but disposed.
- Use fresh napkin for wiping bottles top.
- For cork-sealed bottles, host to be offered a taste; glass to be placed on table edge if taster is desired.
- Screwcaps can be opened with a fresh napkin as a buffer between closure and the server's hand. For all twist off bottles, pouring a taste for the host can be eliminated until further notice to avoid unnecessary touches.
- Decanting, if appropriate or necessary, will be into a freshly cleaned decanter. Decanter placed on edge of table for guests to self-pour.
- Staff should offer a first pour and then place the bottle on the table for guests to self-pour additional pours.
- When possible, if staff are pouring, they should serve multiple tables during the same trip to the wine station.



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## PROTOCOL FOR POURING THROUGHOUT MEAL:

- Guests should be offered choice of self-pouring to minimize touches. Staff should provide decanter if that is requested.
- If guests request glasses be poured throughout the dinner by the server, ensure that there is adequate space for the server to do so and the bottle should not be left on the table. The bottle should be left at the service station and be touched only by the server or sommelier.
- If the table orders a second bottle of the same wine server may continue to pour into same glass or change glasses; if so then glasses are to be placed on edge of table by the customers for clearing by server. New glasses are then placed on edge of table for customers to distribute among themselves. This will depend on the restaurant's level of service formality.
- If a second bottle of different wine is ordered, fresh glasses are to be placed on edge of table; used glasses to be placed on edge of table for clearing.

## WINES BY-THE-GLASS PROTOCOLS:

- Server/bartender should regularly clean hands.
- When preparing wines by the glass, glass or portioning carafe and bottleneck must not touch during pouring.
- Wine-by-the-glass machines or enomatics are a good option to reduce touches.
- Wine BTG placed on edge of table for guests to distribute, taking best care to maintain physical distancing

## COCKTAIL SERVICE PROTOCOL:

- All equipment/mise-en-place is to be completely cleaned after single use.
- Utilize tongs for all garnishes.
- Consider batching cocktail mixes to reduce number of physical touches in preparing cocktails.
- Consider offering a limited number of feature cocktails or house special cocktails to reduce number of bottles and touches.
- Pairing cocktails with menu items and including them on the food menu offers the customer value and reduces touches.
- Bartender should not sample cocktails with a straw when batching or mixing.
- Use of stir sticks and straws should be reduced from cocktails when possible to reduce touches for servers. These often fall on the floor and they are a high contact point for saliva.

## BEER SERVICE PROTOCOL:

- When pouring beer, tap spout and glass must not touch.
- If offering a sampler of beers, recommend that all beers are poured and delivered to the customer with one service touch.
- For pitchers, these can be delivered tableside and guests can be offered the first pour or given the option of pouring their own.
- If a beer comb is to be used for beheading, it must be properly washed/sanitized after each use.

## GLASS POLISHING PROTOCOL:

- When many glasses are being polished pre-shift, gloves and mask are recommended.
- When glasses are being polished singly as needed, standard protocols can apply.
- Glasses should be held by stem or base.
- Polishing cloths changed frequently; machine-washed and sanitized, not just rinsed.

## 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.
- Let's look out for each other! Touching the face is something we all naturally and unconsciously do (studies show the range is 16-23 times per hour); it is important to wash hands or change gloves after touching face.
- Remind staff that all personal connections travel back with them to the workplace and ask them to be respectful of other staff.
- 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.