

# PHYSICAL DISTANCING PRIMER

## WHAT DOES PHYSICAL DISTANCING LOOK LIKE IN RESTAURANTS?

Physical distancing (social distancing) means keeping a distance of at least 2 metres from others at all times. The goal of physical distancing is to reduce the community transmission of infectious agent SARS-Cov-2, commonly known as COVID-19. A person infected with COVID-19 can infect other people with whom they have close contact. As a result, gatherings where people would normally be in close contact are subject to new regulations that are aimed at limiting the transmission of COVID-19. Compliance with these public health orders (PHO) is mandatory for all businesses within the Province of British Columbia.

**Physical distancing regulations** set the distance between people (2 metres) **AND** the number of people seated at a table (6 people) **AND** the number of people that can attend events of all sorts (50 people).

The most recent public health order issued by Dr. Bonnie Henry is dated June 10, 2020. This document updates the terms of re-opening restaurants for dine in across British Columbia. Note: All restaurants must comply with Public Health orders under section 42 of the Public Health Act. Failure to comply with the Order is a fineable offence under section 99(1) (k) of the Public Health Act.

The ability to meet physical distancing criteria is the first determination of whether a business can reopen in the COVID-19 area. For restaurants, physical distancing is the primary measure of your establishment's current operating capacity:

*"You must determine maximum number of patrons and staff that your premises can accommodate if they are standing and sitting 2 metres apart and must document this maximum number in your safety plan."*

– Public Health Order, June 10, 2020

Everyone needs to practice physical distancing, even if you, your staff and your customers have:

- NO symptoms of COVID-19
- NO known risk of exposure
- NOT travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days.

Physical distance is the primary action that the public health order requires of operators in establishing new protocols in response to COVID-19. The WorkSafe BC guidelines re-emphasizes this: it says "use policies and procedures to keep people at a safe physical distance from one another. Limit the number of people in your workplace at any one time, and implement protocols to keep workers at least 2 metres from other workers, customers, and members of the public."

As part of the reopening process, each restaurant must create and have available in their business a WorkSafe BC Safety Plan. At the core of a successful Safety Plan is a commitment to physical distancing. In this document, operators must commit to actively monitor their restaurants with the goal of keeping a physical distance between staff and guests – when standing and/or sitting. Operators should prioritize creating distance and creating systems to monitor areas where patrons may congregate or stand in line to ensure that distance is created.

## HOW CAN YOU PRIORITIZE PHYSICAL DISTANCING?

- Move tables further apart and away from high-traffic areas such as bathrooms and service stations.
- Remove additional bar seating to create 2 metres of distance between parties.
- Remove additional seating at long tables to create 2 metres of distance between parties.
- Make sure furniture is arranged in a way that it is easy for staff to sanitize between seatings.
- Use floor decals or signage to help people maintain an orderly line (inside and out) with people spaced 2 metres apart.
- Spread patio seating out to meet the needs of physical distancing. If possible, apply for a temporary patio extension as permissible in your jurisdiction.
- Use signage or floor markers to set expectations and direct the flow of foot traffic.
- Ensure that patrons do not gather in groups inside or outside of restaurants and bars while waiting for take-out or after picking up food and drinks.
- Temporarily close in restaurant waiting seating and create a designated waiting area outside of the restaurant to prevent overcrowding in entrances.
- Mark lines on the floor or sidewalk 2 metres apart with tape, chalk or decals to show where people should wait and not block the sidewalk.

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## USE OF BARRIERS

The June 10 Public Health Order newly allows for the use of washable, rigid, impermeable partitions as a means to assist in providing physical distancing. To provide necessary protection between parties, barriers must be measured from the top of the countertop or tabletop and must be at least 1.2 metres high. Note: barriers cannot be used in every situation. Call BCRFA if you have any questions about using barriers: 604.669.2239.

**The following physical distancing regulations are taken directly from Dr. Bonnie Henry's public health order dated June 10, 2020.** The order applies to places at which food and/or drinks are prepared and served as well as places at which meals and drinks, including drinks containing liquor are prepared and served.



## CORE INSTRUCTIONS

6. If there are tables and chairs on your premises, patrons must be seated in such a way that
  - a. there are two metres between the patrons seated at the same table, unless they are in the same party, and
  - b. there are two metres between the patrons seated at one table and the patrons seated at another table, unless
    - i. they are in the same party, or
    - ii. the tables are separated by a washable, rigid, impermeable partition that
      - A. extends from the table-top to at least 1.20 metres above the tabletop, if it is attached to the table, floor or another structure at floor level, or
      - B. hangs to the tabletop and is at least 1.20 metres above the tabletop in height, if it is hung from the ceiling or another structure.
7. If there are booths on your premises
  - a. there must be a washable, rigid, impermeable partition which extends at least 1.20 metres above the tabletop ] between each set of booths, and
  - b. patrons must be seated in such a way that there are two metres between the patrons seated at the same booth, unless they are in the same party.
8. There must be no more than six patrons seated at a table or a booth.

9. Patrons seated at a counter must be seated so that they can maintain a distance of two metres from other patrons, unless
  - a. there are in the same party, or
  - b. they are separate by a washable, rigid, impermeable partition
    - i. extends from the counter to at least 1.20 metres above the counter, if it is attached to the counter, floor or another structure at floor level, or
    - ii. hangs to the tabletop and is at least 1.20 metres above the countertop in height, if it is hung from the ceiling or another structure.
10. Patrons standing at a counter or table must be able to maintain a distance of two metres from other patrons, unless
  - a. there are in the same party, or
  - b. they are separate by a washable, rigid, impermeable partition
    - i. extends to at least 1.20 metres above the counter or table-top, if it is attached to the counter, table, floor or another structure at floor level, or
    - ii. hangs to the tabletop or countertop and is at least 1.20 metres above the tabletop or countertop in height, if it is hung from the ceiling or another structure.

**Find the full provincial health order here: [shorturl.at/wBCDG](https://shorturl.at/wBCDG)**

This document will be updated to reflect any new directives as they come in. The date of the referenced public health order will change for easy reference. Public health orders do not have an end date - they are subject to change at the discretion of the Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry.

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Here is an example of a floor plan that has been changed to create distance AND reduce capacity. This model removes some tables and chairs from the business – however, as there aren't always places to put removed items, the model tried to limit the number of things that have been removed.

Total items that have been removed and must be stored:

- 3 bar stools
- 1 indoor round table
- 9 indoor chairs
- 4 narrow bank seating tables
- 1 outdoor round table (could be kept if the patio could be extended past the front of the business)
- 4 outdoor chairs

