



The North Carolina Bar and Tavern Association's Proposed Health Guidance to Allow Bars to Reopen Safely

Guidelines for Bars: All places where people gather pose a risk for COVID-19 transmission regardless of the activity taking place. The North Carolina Bar and Tavern Association has created the following proposed guidelines to help bars and taverns reopen safely and minimize that risk. Bars and taverns should implement the guidance below, as well as all CDC recommended procedures to keep their employees, guests and community as safe as possible from the spread of COVID-19.

This guidance covers the following topics:

- Cloth Face Coverings
- Social Distancing
- Sanitization and Cleaning Practices
- Contact Tracing
- Monitoring Staff
- Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Bar & Tavern Safety Pledge

Cloth Face Coverings

While Social Distancing offers the best form of protection from COVID-19 transmission, there are places where that may not be practical at all times. In circumstances where social distancing from others is not possible, all employees and customers must wear a cloth or disposable face. Face coverings may be removed while a customer is eating or drinking, but should be put back on if a customer will be moving throughout the space.

It is encouraged that businesses provide face coverings for employees and customers as immediately as possible upon entrance to the premises. If provided, they must be single use or properly laundered using hot water and a high heat dryer between uses.

Social Distancing

[Social distancing](#) provides the best protection from the spread of COVID-19. Whenever possible, customers and employees should stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people; they should be discouraged from congregating, gathering in groups and to avoid mass gatherings. Safely reopening bars involves several requirements and recommendations to support social distancing in spaces where the public may gather.

Bars are required to:

Ensure social distancing by arranging tables and seating to achieve at least 6-foot separation between parties for indoor and outdoor dining.

Each group of people sitting at a bar top or counter should be separated by six (6) feet.

Permit no more than 50% of maximum fire capacity inside the bar at all times including staff

Post the reduced "Emergency Maximum Capacity" in conspicuous place. Sign templates are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.

Require staff and guests to wear cloth facial coverings at all times unless they are eating or drinking

Post signage reminding people about social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from others). Know Your W's sign templates are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response website.

Mark six (6) feet of spacing in lines at high-traffic areas for customers, such as any cash register or any place where customers wait to be seated

Install table seating in areas previously used for crowd congregation (dance floors, large open areas)

Place all garnish trays, straws and beverage nap stations away from reach of customers.

Designate an ordering area at bars all bars to allow for socially distance queues and avoid for congestion at the bar. The ordering area should be at least 6 feet from other patrons.

Require all patrons have a specific seat. If all seats are taken, then a bar will may not admit additional patrons until another patron leaves.

At all times have an employee designated as the Safety & Sanitation Manager on-site to oversee social distancing, safety and sanitation measures, as well as address any concerns.

It is recommended that bars:

Remove all bar stools and install physical barricades at each bar top to limit areas of congregation around the bar.

Discourage patrons from standing at all times unless waiting in line to order, or for the bathroom.

Allow no more than 8 people at a table, unless they are a family from the same household. You do not need to ask whether groups are a family.

Don't use shared tables among multiple parties unless the seats can be arranged to maintain social distancing between parties.

Require patrons to wait outside when at capacity, with markings to ensure 6 feet apart, with floor markings and instructions for social distancing.

Post signs reducing bathroom capacity to no more than the number of stalls available to keep customers from congregating in the bathroom while they wait.

Provide hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance when available.

Provide education to employees on how to properly wear, remove, and wash or dispose of face coverings.

Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions at cash registers, or other food / drink pickup areas where maintaining physical separation of 6 feet is difficult.

Advise all bar staff to stay 6 feet away from customers to the extent possible.

Advise all employees to stay 6 feet away from each other to the extent possible.

Staff meetings should be held virtually or provided by written notes instead of congregating.

Reduce condiments and other items on the table for use between customers; provide condiments by request only; or provide disposable condiment packs.

Use touchless payment options as much as possible. Ask customers and employees to exchange cash or card payments by placing on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand. Wipe any pens, counters, or trays between use and between customers with a disinfecting wipe.

Sanitization and Cleaning Practices

Customers and employees should be encouraged to wash their hands as often as necessary. Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of transmission.

Bars are required to:

Disinfect bar tops, tables and booths, including reusable menus, between each use, allowing the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer.

Perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., doors, doorknobs, rails) with an [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#) (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increasing disinfection during peak times or high customer density times and all shared objects (e.g., payment terminals, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays) between use.

Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for wait/food service staff upon reporting to work and frequently throughout shift. Hand washing is required to at least meet the requirements as specified in the [North Carolina Food Code Manual](#), Sections 2-301.12, 2-301.14, and 2-301.15.

It is recommended that bars:

Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at sinks.

Use disposable menus, a menu display board, or mobile options, between customers/groups.

Use single use/disposable linens when possible.

Provide, whenever available, hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance and other areas.

Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stands.

Contact Tracing

Bars are required to:

Keep a list of names and phone numbers for ALL employees and patrons that visit the location daily. This list must be kept on hand for 60 days to allow for contact tracing should an infected person be found to have visited the facility.

Monitoring for Symptoms

If a staff member develops symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home. More information on [how to monitor for symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.

Bars are **required** to:

Conduct daily [symptom](#) screening of employees at entrance with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to [isolate](#). NCBATA recommends the Kinsa App for smartphones which allows bar owners to easily track staff temperatures and symptoms over time.

Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as [Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms](#) flyers

Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.

It is recommended that bars:

Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop.

Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:

- Enforcing employees staying home if sick.
- Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
- Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.

[Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:

- No fever for at least 72 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) AND
- Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms

[Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test results, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

Require symptomatic employees to wear masks until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedure should be implemented by designated personnel following [CDC guidelines](#) once sick employee leaves.

Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463)

Combatting Misinformation

Help make sure that the information your employees are getting is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NCDHHS](#) to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is recommended that bars:

Provide workers with education about COVID-19 strategies, using methods like videos, webinars, or FAQs. Some reliable sources include [NC DHHS COVID-19](#), [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources](#)

Promote informational helplines like 211 and Hope4NC and other [Wellness Resources](#).

Put up signs and posters, such as those found [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#).

Message through media and social media.

Water and Ventilation Systems

Reduced use of water and ventilation systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other from stagnant or standing water.

Before reopening, it is recommended that:

Follow the CDC's [Guidance](#) for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.

Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.



The North Carolina Bar and Tavern Association Bar & Tavern Safety Pledge

As a part of our community, our entire staff has taken the North Carolina Bar and Tavern Safety Pledge. The health and safety of our team, and our guests is our number one priority. We pledge to be 100% in compliance with the NCBATA COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. We pledge to follow all applicable advice from the CDC.

Our Pledge to YOU:

All high-touch surfaces are regularly cleaned & sanitized.

Seating areas are cleaned & sanitized between customers.

Indoor and/or outdoor seating complies with recommended social-distancing guidance.

Hand washing or sanitizing stations are made available to you.

All staff will pass a health check prior to each shift.

Glassware & utensils are sanitized after each use.

Common areas and restrooms are cleaned & sanitized regularly.

All staff will maintain 6 feet of social distance when possible, and will wear a face covering.

We pledge to have a designated Safety & Sanitation Manager on-site to oversee social distancing, safety and sanitation measures, as well as address any concerns.

Your Pledge to US:

You pledge to maintain 6 feet of physical distance between yourself and other customers at all times possible including while waiting to place your order at the bar.

You pledge to wear a mask or face covering when not seated, eating or drinking

You pledge to avoid congregating while standing, waiting in line, or using the bathrooms.