Guidance for Restaurants

The Virgin Islands Department of Health recommends strict adherence to CDC and FDA guidelines, as well as the Universal Guidelines for All Businesses. Additionally, the Department recommends restaurants put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- Allow employees to work from home as much as possible
- Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
  - Temperature screening employees:
    - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
    - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Have dedicated face coverings and dedicated gloves (i.e., only used by one person) worn by all employees, at all times
  - Should not be N-95 or medical variety – these should be saved for use by healthcare workers
• Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible—“Further is safer”

• Employees should increase hygiene practices—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing

• **All employees should stay home if feeling ill, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor** and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee’s household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home.

• Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Virgin Islands Department of Health and **CDC guidelines**. **Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.**

• Plan for potential COVID-19 cases, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)

• Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms

• Update the Employee Illness Policy to include the symptoms of “COVID-19” or create a COVID-19 specific policy. **All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation**

• Post extensive signage on health policies, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
  
  o **CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs**
  
  o **CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms**

• Always follow sanitation frequency guidance contained in this document.

**Consumer Protection**

• **Limit the number of customers in the restaurant to 50% of seating capacity not to exceed 50 people**

• Tables should be spaced at least 6 feet apart

• Limit tables to no more than 6 guests per table
• Mark any indoor or outdoor waiting area so that social distancing standards are met (options can include a text system to alert guests of available seating, an intercom system, or only one member of a party being allowed to wait in the waiting area)

• Live music should not be permitted

• Screen customers for illness upon their entry into the restaurant:
  o Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer in addition to screening questions. Customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise.
  o Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms
    ▪ Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
    ▪ Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
    ▪ Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

**Business Process Adaptations**

• Mitigate exposure in the workplace by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling

• Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection practices, according to [CDC guidelines](https://www.cdc.gov), with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours

• Sanitize all front-of-house contact surfaces including door handles, screens, phones, pens, keyboards and other areas of hand contact every two hours, at a minimum

• Place hand sanitizer stations in restaurant lobby and bathrooms, as well as at cashier stations

• Use menus that are disposable or sanitized between each use

• Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins (gloves should be used by staff while rolling silverware in designated sanitary areas)

• Sanitize all tabletop items, including condiments, after each table turns (or use disposables)

• Sanitize chairs, especially where contact occurs, after each table turns

• Do not offer self-serve buffets, condiments on a counter for use by multiple tables, or beverage station re-use
Additional Guidance for Bars

- **Seating must observe 6 spacing between bar seating and/or standing patrons**
- Total number of persons in or outdoor is to be limited to accommodate physical distancing,
- **Sanitizer is to be used on entering the bar and should be available at each seating**
- **Disposable drink containers are to be used. This would include bottles, cans, etc.**
- Bar must be cleaned and disinfected frequently in addition to with every change in patrons
- **Bar seating must be disinfected after each use.**
- **Parties and Live music are not permitted.**
- If tables, follow the restaurant guidance above

To ensure compliance DOH Division of Environmental Health will WARN, CITE, CLOSE & CITE, and SUSPENSION approach in that order for repeated COVID19 public health non-compliance.

1. **Warning Written Citation**
2. **2nd Violation will result in a fine**
3. **3rd Violation will result in a Citation and a Closure for a period not to exceed 7 calendar days.**
4. **4th. If establishment continues to be non-compliance after exhausting 1, 2, and 3, then suspension of Business License and Health Permit may occur.**