

Iowa Food Business Operating Criteria during COVID-19

Issued June 12, 2020

Iowa bars and restaurants have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The [Governor's Proclamation of Disaster Emergency issued on June 10, 2020](#), allows bars, restaurants, wineries, breweries, distilleries, wedding reception venues, country clubs, and other social and fraternal clubs in all counties to operate with limited on-premises service and if mandatory requirements are followed effective 8 a.m. on June 12, 2020, until 11:59 p.m. on June 25, 2020. Additionally, if establishments have any alcohol-related inquiries they may contact the [Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division](#).

It is critical that bar, restaurant, winery, brewery, distillery, wedding reception venue, country club, and other social and fraternal club personnel review, and these establishments **must** ensure the following **mandatory requirements** included in the governor's proclamation are in place and enforced:

- Establishments must ensure at least six feet of physical distance between each group or person dining/drinking alone. Seating at booths closer than six feet may satisfy this requirement if the booths are separated by a barrier of sufficient height to fully separate seated customers. All patrons must have a seat at a table or bar, and an establishment must limit patrons from congregating together closer than six feet.
- Establishments should also implement reasonable measures for the circumstances of each business to ensure social distancing of employees and customers, increased hygiene practices, and other public health measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19, consistent with guidance issued by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Additionally, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals and the Iowa Department of Public Health **strongly recommend that all restaurants adhere to the following guidance:**

- If seating at a bar area is used, consider using that seating for parties of one and not groups.
- Disinfect tables and chairs after each customer use.
- Clean and sanitize table condiments, reusable menus, digital ordering devices, check presenters, pens, napkin dispensers, salt and pepper shakers, and other commonly-touched items between each customer use.
- Use prewrapped silverware and eliminate table presets including table tents, menus, salt and pepper shakers, napkin dispensers, and condiments.
- Eliminate refilling customer beverages from common containers (e.g., pitchers).
- Discard single-use or paper articles, such as paper menus, after each use.
- Create and implement an enhanced cleaning/sanitizing schedule for all food contact surfaces, and cleaning/disinfecting of non-food contact surfaces.
- Disinfect commonly-touched surfaces throughout entire facility (both front and back-of-house) such as door handles, credit card machines, bathrooms, etc., at least once every hour.

- To the extent possible, on-premises service should be by reservation only and customers should be screened upon reservation and arrival as to whether anyone in the party is positive, has any symptoms, is under quarantine, or has been exposed to COVID-19.
- Post signage on entrance door that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 will be permitted in the establishment.
- Screen all employees each shift before entering the facility for symptoms (i.e., fever of 100°F or higher, cough, shortness of breath, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, diarrhea, or vomiting). Immediately exclude anyone with symptoms from entering.
- Where possible, workstations should be staggered to avoid employees standing directly opposite one another or next to each other, and maintain six feet of social distance.
- Require employees with direct customer contact to wear cloth or other mask that is laundered or replaced daily.
- Frequently monitor employee handwashing and ensure no bare hand contact with ready-to-eat foods.
- Actively monitor self-service operations including buffets, salad bars, and condiment and beverage stations to ensure customers maintain six feet of separation from other guests and staff.
- In the event self-service operations are contaminated by bodily fluid discharged through cough, sneeze, or another method, immediately close the self-service station, discard exposed food and beverages, and thoroughly clean and disinfect the station before resuming use.
- Notify customers by signage to report concerns of social distancing infractions to the manager.
- Use technological solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction (e.g. mobile ordering, mobile access to menus to plan in advance, text on arrival for seating, contactless payment options).
- Enhance employee safety training, emphasizing employee health, handwashing, and personal hygiene practices.
- Have hand sanitizer and sanitizing products readily available for employees and customers.
- Designate with signage, tape, or by other means appropriate social distancing spacing for employees and customers. Facilitate and designate social distancing for those waiting to enter your establishment.
- If possible, provide distinct walking lanes to minimize close contact as customers are being seated to conform to social distancing practices. For example, in a table/booth layout, central tables can be removed, and markings can be installed designating the path for seating.
- Assign an employee each shift to monitor social distancing, sanitation, and hygiene protocols.