



## Interim Guidance for Bars and Places that Serve Food (May 18, 2021)

### Guidelines for Conducting Business:

Any scenario in which people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All organizations and programs that gather groups of people should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission. The guidance below will help bars and places that serve food reduce the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, we strongly encourage all employers to direct employees and customers to information [Find Your Spot, Take Your Shot](#) and encourage them to get vaccinated. For guidance on vaccinations, please refer to our [Interim Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Vaccinated Against COVID-19](#).

### This guidance covers the following topics:

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Communications and Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

### Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

[Social distancing](#) is an important way to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing (“physical distancing”) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. If you are not fully vaccinated, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.

### Bars and places that serve food are recommended to:

- Establish seating areas for patrons to discourage standing at the bar or in commonly trafficked areas.
- Encourage all patrons to remain seated.
- Ensure social distancing by arranging tables and seating to achieve at least 6-foot separation between parties.
- Ensure each group of people sitting at a counter are separated by six (6) feet.
- Limit self-service or walk up service if possible to prevent patrons congregating around bar area.
- Designate an ordering area at bar when wait staff are not available to visit each table. The ordering area should be at least 6 feet from other patrons seated at bar.

## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- For live music or entertainment, ensure that there is at least 6 feet distance between performers and customers.
- Post signage at the main entrance that reminds people to stay 6 feet apart.
  - [NC DHHS Know Your Ws](#) provides [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Combined English and Spanish](#) versions of the “Wait” flyer.
- Clearly mark six (6) feet of spacing in lines at high-traffic areas for customers, such as any cash register, ID check, or any place where customers may congregate or wait.
- Provide service only to seated patrons, or, if not applicable, to patrons in designated areas that are practicing Social Distancing.
- Close any dance floors.
- Clearly mark designated entry and exit points to the extent possible.
- Develop reservation times to the extent possible to help limit wait times and lines.
- Place partitions between bartenders/servers, security personnel at entrance, or other staff and customers when possible. Physical barriers do not replace face coverings.
- Allow games, such as pool and darts, to be played only if players maintain 6 feet of distance from other players.

### Cloth Face Coverings

There is evidence that wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially because people may be infected with the virus and not know it.

#### **It is strongly recommended that bars and places that serve food:**

- Have all employees who are not fully vaccinated wear a face covering when they are indoors and outdoors and not able to maintain 6ft of distance, unless the individual states that an exception applies.
- Have all customers who are not fully vaccinated wear a face covering when indoors outdoors and not able to maintain 6ft of distance unless they are actively eating or drinking, or the customer states that an exception applies.
- Make good-faith efforts to provide to workers either a one-week supply of reusable face coverings or a new disposable face covering each day.
- New face coverings should be provided during the work day if the worker’s face covering becomes soiled, torn, or wet.
- Provide disposable face coverings to customers to wear while at the establishment.
- Visit NC DHHS [COVID-19 response site](#) for more information about the face covering guidance and access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

### Cleaning and Hygiene

Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer (with 60% or more alcohol content) reduces the spread of transmission.

#### **It is strongly recommended that bars and places that serve food:**

- Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for staff and individuals. Require handwashing of staff immediately upon reporting to work, after contact with individuals, after performing cleaning and disinfecting activities, and frequently throughout the day.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance, and any other areas throughout premises as needed.

## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- ❑ Clean surfaces once a day, prioritizing high-touch surfaces. If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, clean and disinfect the space using an EPA-approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19).
- ❑ Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at all sinks.

### Monitoring for Symptoms

Staff should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

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

#### It is recommended that bars and places that serve food:

- ❑ Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop. 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 or to their healthcare provider.
- ❑ Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who are symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as [Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms](#) flyers (English - [Color, Black & White](#); Spanish - [Color, Black & White](#)).
- ❑ Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:
  - Requiring employees to 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 24 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**\*A test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.**
- ❑ [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, 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)

#### Bars and places that serve food can consider:

- ❑ Conducting daily [symptom](#) screening (standard interview questionnaire [English](#) | [Spanish](#)) of employees at entrance to workplace with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to [isolate](#).

### Combating Misinformation

Help ensure that the information your staff is 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.

## NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### It is recommended that bars and places that serve food:

- 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 Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash](#) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#).

### Water and Ventilation Systems

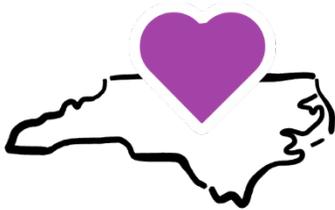
Reduced use of water and ventilations systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other bacteria from stagnant or standing water.

### Before opening, it is recommended that bars and places that serve food:

- Follow the CDC's [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown](#) or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- For parts of the indoor business, ensure ventilation systems operate properly and as feasible direct air outside, 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.

### Additional Resources

- NC DHHS: [North Carolina COVID-19](#)
- CDC: [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- CDC: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- CDC: [Reopening Guidance](#)
- EPA: [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- FDA: [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- HHS/OSHA: [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)



**#StayStrongNC**

**Staying apart brings us together.  
Protect your family and neighbors.**

**Learn more at [nc.gov/covid19](https://nc.gov/covid19).**



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**