



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Guidance for Food and Liquor Serving Premises

Based on the Provincial Health Officer's Order to Food and Liquor Serving Premises, of June 30, 2021

August 16, 2021

Note that this guidance does not apply to Food and Liquor Serving Premises that are under orders by medical health officers. Check the [Medical Health Officer Orders](#) section of the Provincial Health Officer "Orders and notices" website for these orders.

This guidance is intended for owners, operators and patrons of restaurants, coffee shops, cafes, cafeterias and food primary and liquor primary establishments, including pubs, bars, lounges and nightclubs as well as liquor manufacturing facilities that have tasting rooms and private clubs. This guidance is based on known evidence as of Aug 16, 2021.

For clarity the Provincial Health Officer's Order (the Order) is not directed at hospitals, licensed care facilities, assisted living residences, independent living facilities, correctional facilities, industrial camps, school and workplace cafeterias, cafeterias for residents attending educational institutions or other cafeterias that serve food or liquor to residents rather than to the general public.

Note that the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) or medical health officers (MHOs) may announce specific Orders from time to time to protect public health.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues and while vaccinations are being provided, it is still critical that we reduce the risk of transmission by ensuring that essential hygienic practices and cleaning processes are followed, and that food service establishments have [Communicable Disease Plans](#) in place.

All food service establishments must comply with relevant PHO, MHO and other Provincial Orders, including the [Food and Liquor Serving Premises Order](#) and, where pertinent, the order on [Gatherings and Events](#).

All [BC Food Premises Regulation](#) requirements remain unchanged and in place. Continue to maintain food safety practices: [Clean, Separate, Cook, Chill](#).



Ministry of Health



BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



Legal disclaimer:

The purpose of this guidance is to provide practical public health advice to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in British Columbia. This guidance does not have legal authority; however, not following the guidance in this document may leave individuals or organizations open to legal action. This guidance does not supersede Orders or direction under the *Public Health Act* or any other provincial or federal legislation. This guidance is subject to changes.

Purpose of the guidance

This guidance provides information on ways to comply with the PHO Order on Food and Liquor Serving Premises, which applies to owners, operators and patrons of restaurants, coffee shops, cafes, cafeterias and food primary and liquor primary establishments, including pubs, bars, lounges and nightclubs as well as liquor manufacturing facilities that have tasting rooms and private clubs.

As an owner or operator, this guidance will support you when preparing or amending your Communicable Disease Plan. This guidance will enable patrons to understand their responsibilities under the Order and ways to comply with the premises' Communicable Disease Plan.

This guidance is based upon current knowledge, and it should be understood that it is subject to change as new data become available and developments arise.

The Public Health Agency of Canada considers that COVID-19 is spread from infected people to others by coughing, sneezing, singing, shouting or talking (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/main-modes-transmission.html>). These activities can spread respiratory droplets and aerosols containing the virus that can come into contact with the mucous membranes of another person's eyes, nose, or mouth. Poor ventilation can allow aerosols to remain in the air, increasing the risk of transmission. This information may help guide your COVID-19 risk reduction efforts.

Good sanitation is important to reducing foodborne illness and risk of communicable disease in any food or liquor serving premises. The resources presented here may help you maintain good sanitation practices.

Resource:

- [BCCDC Guideline for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

Overview of this document

These guidelines are organized into the following series of tip sheets:

- Employee Sickness
- Personal Hygiene
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Modify the Environment
- Managing Information



Tip sheet – Employee Sickness

Goal: To prevent sick employees from spreading disease by ensuring employees stay home if they are ill.



- Tell your employees if they are sick with any symptoms consistent with a communicable disease such as a gastrointestinal illness or COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, they must remain at home, and contact their family physician/primary care provider or Health Link BC at 8-1-1 for further assistance.
- Thoughtfully plan your sick leave policy to create an environment where employees feel supported in staying home when they are sick and communicate this policy to all staff.
- Have operational contingency plans in place for when employees must remain home when sick (e.g., modifying systems to operate with fewer employees).
- Have employees declare they are symptom-free when signing in for the day.
- Sick employees should use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- If while at work, an employee starts experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, ask the employee to don a mask, to leave work immediately, go straight home, and contact their family physician/primary care provider or Health Link BC at 8-1-1 for further guidance.
- Ensure that objects and surfaces touched by sick employees who have left the premises are cleaned and disinfected before being used by others.
- Anyone with symptoms can now be assessed and receive a COVID-19 test.
- Testing is not recommended for people who do not have symptoms.
- If an employee has a COVID-19 diagnosis, the local public health department will identify any co-workers who may have been exposed to the sick person.

Resources:

- [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)



Tip sheet – Personal Hygiene

Goal: To limit the spread of the virus by promoting good personal hygiene including hand washing, hand sanitizing, and cough/sneeze etiquette.



- Replace physical greetings such as handshakes and hugs with non-contact greetings.
- Consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer at entrances with posters reminding of the importance of handwashing/sanitizing following contact with common touch surfaces.
- Hand washing facilities or alcohol-based sanitizers must be within easy reach of any self-service food or drink stations on the premises.
- Washrooms and dedicated hand washing sinks should have liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water at all times.
- Consider providing designated uniforms laundered by a service or encourage workers to wear clothes that can be washed frequently.
- Employees should wash their hands with soap and water at the start and end of their shift, after using the bathroom, before eating, after returning from a break, and when hands are visibly soiled.
- Employees should avoid the use of hand sanitizer when handling food.
- Employees should practice good hygiene throughout their shift including proper hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Employees should avoid touching their face without washing hands first and should wash their hands after touching their face.
- There should be no sharing of cigarettes, vaping equipment, utensils, cups, plates and other equipment.
- Employees should be educated about communicable diseases, such as gastrointestinal illness or COVID-19, so they know how to minimize spread.
- Consider providing electronic COVID-19 resources to all employees.

Resources:

- Poster: [BCCDC Handwashing](#)
- Video: [Hand Washing](#)
- Video: [Cough and Sneeze Etiquette](#)
- Link: [BCCDC Vaping, Smoking and COVID-19](#)



Tip sheet – Personal Protective Equipment

Goal: To understand the purpose and limitations of personal protective equipment and to ensure that PPE is selected and used appropriately.



- Masks and other PPE can reduce transmission but should never be relied upon as a sole protective measure to prevent transmission.
- In situations where the other controls cannot be maintained, service employees and food handlers may choose to wear non-medical masks and face shields (though a face shield should not be a substitute for a non-medical mask).
- Wearing a mask is recommended for people who are not fully immunized. Full immunization is reached after fourteen days following a second COVID-19 vaccine. For more information and frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit [ImmunizeBC's COVID-19 website](#).
- Employees should be aware of the following:
 - Masks can become contaminated on the outside when touched by hands so employees should avoid touching or adjusting them often.
 - Masks that become wet, soiled or damaged are less effective and should be replaced immediately.
 - Masks should be put on and taken off correctly, including not touching the front of the mask, and washing hands.
 - Cloth masks should be washed every day using the warmest water setting and stored in a clean dry place to prevent contamination.
 - Never share masks with others.
 - If a non-cloth mask is used (e.g., medical mask), employees should be reminded that these items are for single use only.
 - In addition to following hygienic mask handling procedures (e.g., washing hands after removing a mask), masks should not be cleaned for reuse.
- Gloves for service employees and front-of-house staff are not recommended for routine work.
- If food handlers wear gloves for cleaning, if they have a cut, or for any other reason, the gloves should be taken off correctly (see video below), they must be changed between tasks, and hands must be washed between glove changes.
- Glove use is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

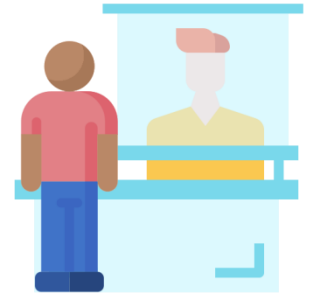
Resources:

- Video: [How to remove disposable gloves](#)
- WorkSafe BC: [Selecting and Using Masks](#)
- WorkSafe BC: [How to Use a Mask](#)
- BCCDC: [Guideline on Types of Masks](#)



Tip sheet – Modify the Environment

Goal: Change the environment to reduce common touch points and make interacting with others safer.



- Eliminate communal storage areas for employees' personal belongings and consider providing separate sealable bins or lockers instead.
- If possible, increase the amount of outdoor air being brought in and/or natural ventilation. Open windows but be cautious about not allowing pests to gain entrance (install screens if possible).
- Dining area tables could be kept clear of utensils, menu boards and shared condiment containers. Instead, these items could be provided to patrons on request.
- Consider using single-use condiments and replacing re-usable menus with single-use menus or touchless menu options (e.g., online menus and sandwich board displays).
- Encourage patrons to order take out food in advance to reduce line ups on site.
- If a table is not immediately available, instead of having patrons wait in the lobby, consider sending them off-site and using electronic notification when their table is ready (e.g., use text messages rather than common touch pagers).
- Consider allowing children to keep colouring crayons rather than re-using the crayons.
- Encourage the use of touch-free payment options.
- When cash is the only payment option, staff must avoid touching their eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands.



Tip sheet – Managing Information

Goal: To stay informed, follow public health Orders and guidance, keep records, and make sure information you share is clear, accurate and easy to find.



- Consider using signage as follows:
 - On front doors to tell anyone not to enter if they are feeling ill or have any symptoms.
 - Above or beside all bathroom and kitchen sinks to explain proper hand washing.
- Employees or a manager should keep daily records of the people who worked together and retain these records for at least 30 days.
- Consider maintaining up-to-date and consistent messaging on websites, social media, emails, press releases, and when speaking with patrons so details are aligned, timely and accurate.
- Employees should be encouraged to provide regular feedback on any issues with COVID-19 prevention measures. Consider providing a means for employees to do this anonymously.
- Consider reassessing and updating your Communicable Disease Plan as needed.

TIPS for EFFECTIVE SIGNAGE:

- Communicate information in multiple languages and use diagrams or pictures.
- The font size on signage should be large enough for everyone to read from a distance.
- In wet areas or outside, posters could be placed in plastic sleeves to protect them from water damage.
- Consider placing important signage in conspicuous areas and away from other posted information so it is clearly visible (i.e., avoid posting signs next to product advertisements and coupon boards).

Resources:

- Link: [Translated training materials and signage](#)
Poster: [BCCDC Do Not Enter if Sick](#)

