RESTAURANTS & BARS | Minnesota Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements Checklist

INDUSTRY GUIDANCE FOR SAFELY REOPENING:

EMPLOYER PREPAREDNESS PLAN REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Businesses and employers providing food and beverages for on-site consumption (such as bars, restaurants, bakeries, breweries, wineries, farmers markets, grocery stores and convenience stores) must develop and implement a COVID-19 Business Preparedness Plan that addresses the following components. Businesses must ensure the Plan is evaluated, monitored, executed, and updated under the supervision of a designated Plan Administrator. Employers must ensure the Plan is posted at all of the business’s workplaces in readily accessible locations that will allow for the Plan to be readily reviewed by all workers, as required.

KEY REQUIREMENTS:

➤ Have adopted and implemented a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan
➤ Ensure a minimum of 6 feet of distance between tables
➤ Limit indoor occupant capacity to no more than 50% up to 250 persons
➤ Do not exceed 250 persons in outdoor spaces
➤ Limit table service to 4 persons, or 6 if part of one family unit
➤ Require reservations
➤ Require workers to wear masks at all times and strongly encourage customers to wear masks when not eating or drinking

WORKER PROTECTIONS AND PROTOCOLS FOR ALL WORKPLACES

Ensure sick workers stay home

1. Establish health screening protocols for workers at the start of each shift (e.g. health screening survey, taking temperature). See the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)’s Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhealthscreen.pdf). The checklist is also available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html).

2. Workers with COVID-19 symptoms should be sent home immediately. If they cannot be sent home immediately, isolate in a closed room until they can be sent home. Workers who have been in close contact with a household member with COVID should not be at work until their quarantine period is finished.

3. Establish communication protocols and steps to take when workers have been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace.

4. Designate an individual to maintain communication with and gather information from workers who may be ill, as to ensure the privacy of workers is maintained.

5. Establish worker sickness reporting protocols.


7. Establish a process to identify contact between infected workers and other workers who may have been exposed. (CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020 www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html).

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8. Evaluate and adjust sick leave policies to reflect the need for isolation and incentivize workers who are sick to stay home.

9. Provide accommodations for “high risk” and vulnerable populations. See CDC’s People Who are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html). Vulnerable workers should be encouraged to self-identify, and employers should avoid making unnecessary medical inquiries. Employers should take particular care to reduce these workers’ risk of exposure.

10. Clearly communicate sick leave policies to all workers.

Social distancing – Workers must be at least six-feet apart

1. Maximize remote-working - Workers who are able to work from home must work from home.

2. Stagger shifts and breaks; Extend work-hours and create additional shifts to reduce number of workers per shift.

3. Evaluate traffic patterns and “choke points” to reduce crowding at entrances, in hallways, elevators, waiting areas, break areas, common areas to maintain 6’ of physical distancing.

4. Limit collective gatherings of workers to 10 people or less to maintain 6’ of physical distancing.

5. Limit the number of people in restrooms to maintain 6’ feet of physical distancing.

6. Ensure 6’ of physical distancing in work areas, including at workstations, productions lines, break rooms, meeting rooms, waiting rooms, lobbies, etc.

7. Limit worker interaction across floors, buildings, campuses, worksites, etc.

8. Increase physical space between workers and other workers, customers and clients through the use of partitions and barriers of sufficient dimension and appropriate material, e.g. Plexiglass or taut heavy plastic curtains stretched and secured, as necessary, to protect workers.

Worker hygiene and source controls

1. Ensure workers regularly wash their hands. Ensure handwashing and/or hand-sanitizer facilities are readily available and appropriately stocked.

2. Provide protective equipment and supplies, such as source control face coverings, face-shields, gloves, hand-sanitizer, disinfectants and provide training when required and on proper use.

3. Require the use of source control face coverings (e.g. cloth face coverings).

4. Post “hand-washing” and “cover your cough” signs.

5. Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching the handles, opening-devices, or powered door-operators with the hand, whenever possible. If the door cannot be opened without touching the handle or door-operator with the hand, the business must ensure a trash-receptacle is placed by the door to ensure a paper towel can be readily disposed of when operating the door. The location and positioning of waste-receptacles should not interfere with Life Safety requirements (e.g. egress, evacuation, emergency equipment) or any reasonable accommodations provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

6. Community drinking stations and water-fountains should not be available for use. Touchless water-filling stations may still be provided

7. Food should not be shared communally.

8. Provide tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette and no-touch disposal bins.

Workplace building and ventilation protocols

General Building Conditions: Businesses must assess the status and capacities of the utility-systems within the building (e.g. ventilation, water-supply, sewer, gas), as well as potential issues associated with vermin, molds, and mildew, prior to putting the building into an operational status.

1. Follow established protocols for starting mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life-safety, and other systems after non-use according to the Authorities Having Jurisdiction.

2. Assess the building for indications of pest and vermin infestation, and consult a pest-control professional as appropriate.

Ventilation System Start-up: Businesses must evaluate the operational capacity, and increase, improve, and maintain ventilation provided throughout the building.

1. Increase the outdoor air-percentage to increase dilution of contaminants, and eliminate recirculating, whenever possible, while maintaining indoor air-conditions.

2. For heating-ventilation-air-conditioning systems that recirculate air, businesses need to improve central-air filtration to at least the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack (at least MERV-14 preferred), and seal the edges of filters to further limit by-pass around the filters.

3. Replace and upgrade air filters prior to re-occupancy.

4. Run systems on full economizer as outside air-conditions allow.

5. Consult an HVAC professional to ensure proper ventilation is maintained.

Day-To-Day Operations: Once systems are in a safe operational status, businesses should ensure the following practices and protocols are maintained:

1. Continuously maximize fresh-air into the workplace, and eliminate air recirculation.

2. Maintain relative humidity levels of RH 40-60%

3. Keep systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible) to enhance the ability to filter contaminants out of the air.

4. Add a flush cycle to the controls of the HVAC system, and run HVAC systems for 2-hours before and after occupancy.

5. Check and rebalance the HVAC system to provide negative air-pressure whenever possible.

6. Supplement ventilation-system with the use of portable HEPA filter units whenever possible.

7. Minimize air-flow from blowing across people.

8. Consult an HVAC professional or the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers to ensure proper ventilation is provided, and ventilation-systems are properly maintained. See ASHRAE’s COVID-19 Preparedness Resources (www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources).

Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocols

1. Establish a documented sanitation schedule and checklist, identifying surfaces/equipment to be sanitized, the agent to be used, and the frequency at which sanitation occurs.

2. Routinely sanitize all areas, such as offices, restrooms, locker and changing rooms, common areas, including floors, shared electronic equipment, machinery, tools, controls, etc.

3. Frequently sanitize all high-touch items, such as doorknobs, countertops, barriers, railings, handles, and other surfaces.

4. Electronic devices (e.g. light-switches, circuit-breakers) should not be sanitized with a liquid agent. Consider covering switches/devices with a poly-covering that allows the user to manipulate the device without touching the switch, and change out the poly-covering frequently. Electronic devices must be sanitized only when disconnected from the power-source, and sanitized in accordance with the listing/labeling requirements.

5. Personal equipment, tools and phones should not be shared or, if shared, should be sanitized after each use.


7. Select appropriate and ensure the needed supply of disinfectants – consider effectiveness and safety. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) List N has identified a list of products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2. See EPA’s List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2).

8. Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets, follow manufacturer specifications, and use required personal protective equipment for the product.
Drop-off, pick-up, and delivery practices and protocols

1. Receive deliveries via a contactless method.
2. Businesses must provide for contactless deliveries that promote for delivery at a doorway, where persons maintain a distance at least 6-feet away while verifying receipt of the delivery between the worker and the delivery person. Whenever possible, businesses should attempt conduct transactions electronically (e.g. app, phone) to eliminate the need for close contact between workers and delivery personnel.
3. Workers must maintain a distance 6-feet or greater from others during interactions while receiving or exchanging deliveries.
4. Workers must minimize the unnecessary exchanging or sharing of scanners, pens, or other tools with delivery personnel.

Communications and training practices and protocol

1. All workers and members of management must be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure, use of protective equipment and supplies, as well as applicable policies, procedures, practices, and protocols. The training must be provided by and paid for by the business. The training must be provided in a manner and language that each employee can understand, and must be adjusted to reasonably accommodate all limiting factors present. See “OSHA’s Resource for Development and Delivery of Training to Workers” (osha.gov/Publications/osha3824.pdf). See also Minnesota’s “Small Assemblies for Testing and Training” for guidance with facilitating training for employees while addressing COVID-19 implications (dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID-19_training_facilities.pdf).
2. Businesses must ensure the COVID-19 Business Preparedness Plan is posted at all of the business’s workplaces in readily accessible locations, and is shared with and reviewed by all workers.
3. Businesses must ensure the necessary or required rules and practices are communicated to workers, and adequately enforce their provisions.
4. Workers must ensure they comply with and follow established rules and practices.
5. Communication to educate clients and customers about the steps being taken for their protection to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 is encouraged. Protective measures should be communicated to clients and customers prior to, and at the start of, the appointment or reservation to both educate customers and clients as well as inform them of their role in protecting the workers and other clients and customers.

What clients and customers can do to minimize the transmission

1. Advise clients and customers to conduct a self-check of their body temperature the day of their appointment or reservation.
2. Limit the number of persons accompanying the client during appointment.
3. Post signage and develop messaging that if clients or customers do not feel well or have any symptoms compatible with COVID-19, they should stay home. They should also stay home if they have a household member experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19. Refer to CDC’s What to Do if You are Sick or Caring for Someone Who is Sick (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html).
4. If customers or clients begin to feel unwell while in the workplace, they should leave immediately and isolate themselves at home. See CDC’s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020 (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html).
5. Have customers and clients review a screening survey that checks for COVID-19 symptoms, close contacts with confirmed cases and quarantined cases, and recent out of continent travel. The questions would be the same as those completed by workers. MDH’s Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf).

6. Encourage customers and clients to regularly wash and/or sanitize their hands.

7. Limit the equipment, products, or items touched by the customer or client while in workplace.

8. Have customers and clients wear a face covering or mask, other than when outside, unless not recommended for health or physical ability reasons. Cloth face coverings are NOT a substitute for maintaining a physical distance of 6-feet from other people. Refer to CDC guidance on cloth face coverings (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face coverings.html).

9. Make sure each piece of equipment used is wiped down before and after each use by a customer or client, and dispose of the wipe accordingly.

Additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment

1. Contactless payment should be used whenever possible. Utilize a electronic fund-transfer service or credit-card payment method that allows the client or customer to fully initiate and complete the payment transaction remotely, or while separated from the worker.

2. When contactless payment is not possible, payment must be made in a manner that allows for at least 6-feet of distance between the worker and client or customer.

3. During check-in and check-out, the configuration at the payment stations, and the space between the worker and the customer/client must allow for physical distancing of at least 6-feet, or a physical barrier must be installed.

4. Install barriers of sufficient dimension and appropriate material, e.g. Plexiglass or taut heavy plastic curtains stretched and secured, as necessary, to protect worker at the check-in and check-out counter.

Additional protections and protocol for managing occupancy

1. Indoor seating at up to 50% occupancy, with a maximum of 250 individuals is allowed. A maximum of 250 individuals is allowed at outdoor seating. All customers must be seated, including at bars.

2. Businesses must limit number of customers and clients necessary to allow for the required social distancing and not exceed required percentage of occupancy where required.
   - Number of customers at any one time is limited to the number for whom physical distancing of 6’ can be maintained between tables.
   - A limit of two customers may be seated together at the counter for service at any one time.
   - A limit of four customers may be seated together at a table at any one time, unless the customers are a household, then the limit is six customers.
   - Bands are allowed but must maintain social distancing.
   - Dancing is not permitted.

3. Advertise business protocols so that current and potential clients are aware of changes.

4. Advise customer and clients of the added COVID-19 precautions that will be taken prior to arrival at the site. Use web-sites, social media, pre-appointment phone calls and confirmations, and other outlets to educate customers and clients on the steps being taken for their protection and the protection of workers.

5. Encourage customers and clients of “high risk” to postpone appointment or reservation. Persons who may be at higher risk for severe illness should consider delaying seeking or providing these services (See www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html).

6. Post signage at the business entrance outlining established protocols.

7. Advise customers and clients to conduct a self-check of their body temperature on the day of their appointment.

8. Email or text a screening survey on the day of the appointment or reservation and/or post screening questions at the establishment.
9. Have customer and clients respond to the screening-survey questions upon arrival and check-in, and verify that they have read the screening-survey and can respond “no” to all questions.

10. Decline to provide services to a customer or client if there is any suspicion that they are sick or symptomatic, and advise them to leave the facility.

Additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction in settings where face-to-face interaction is part of the service


2. Additional measures to control exposure may include:
   - Standing to the side or behind the customer as much as possible
   - Use work practices such as having the customers pass the food down the table or pass plates back to the server.

3. Customers are strongly encouraged to bring and wear face coverings at any time when not eating.

Additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers

1. Provide hand sanitizer at the entrance, point of purchase, and prominent locations for customers/clients.

2. Check-out areas and other areas of congestion should be marked to provide for physical distancing of at least 6 feet, including floor markers for distance, lane lines and marking of adjacent areas where customers or clients may be waiting for business access.

3. Space, configuration and flow of the establishment should be evaluated to allow for physical distancing of 6-feet by all workers and customers/clients.

4. Post instructions for customers at entrances, and inform customers:
   - Not to enter if they are experiencing symptoms;
   - About the facility’s occupancy limits;
   - They are required to wear face-coverings, unless outside or not medically or physically possible; and
   - They are required to adhere to hygiene and social distancing instructions, signage and markings.

Additional protections and protocols specific to bars, restaurants and other retail food settings

1. Continue following MDH’s requirements for reporting food worker illness and exclusion.

2. Train and remind workers, using visual reminders, of required hand hygiene practices, including handwashing procedure and frequency, restricting bare hand contact with ready-to-eat food, proper glove use, and COVID-19 precautions when reopening establishments.

3. Recommended best practice: Plan worker schedules so that teams work together, when practical. For example, Aaden, Javier and Ann always work together, Hodan, Dawb and Peter always work together, but members of one team never work with another team. Scheduling in teams can help to reduce exposures within the staff.

4. Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces according to the Minnesota Food Code
   - Follow the manufacturer’s label to ensure that appropriate products are used to sanitize food contact surfaces. Not all disinfectants are appropriate for food contact surface sanitizing.

   - Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment after each use.

   - Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. For example, concentrations, application method, contact and drying time, and the use of personal protective equipment, and do not mix products together.

   - Clean and disinfect reusable menus after each use. If using paper menus, discard them after each customer use.

   - Recommended best practice: Consider providing cleaning and disinfection kits (sprays or buckets, hand sanitizers or other cleaning supplies) that are readily accessible throughout the establishment for areas that will be cleaned and disinfected frequently.

5. Do not allow guests to congregate in checkout and waiting areas, outside restrooms or in bars, maintain at a minimum 6’ of physical distancing.

6. Require appointments for services or reservations with call-ahead seating or online reservations to better space clients or customers and eliminate waiting.
Number of customers at any one time is limited to the number for whom physical distancing of 6’ can be maintained between tables.

A limit of two customers may be seated together at the counter for service at any one time.

A limit of four customers may be seated together at a table at any one time, unless the customers are a household, then the limit is six customers.

7. Any barriers or partitions used should be of sufficient dimension and appropriate material, e.g. Plexiglass or taut heavy plastic curtains stretched and secured, as necessary, to create separation at counters, booths and tables to protect workers and customers.

8. Avoid utilizing wood, fabric or laminate as the primary materials for barriers. Barriers should take into account the tallest user, and the anticipated behavior of users within the partitioned area. Slots in barriers may be necessary for some transactions; these should be as small as possible and not compromise the breathing zone of users. Barriers should be fixed installations, where possible, to avoid tipping hazards, and must not impede emergency exit for staff or patrons or fire protection/sprinkler systems.

9. Require customers to be seated in bar areas.

10. Limit contact between wait workers and customers by assigning wait staff to areas and tables.

11. Instruct servers to take orders from behind the customer and remind customers to keep facing forward.

12. Remove high-touch self-service containers and items requiring frequent hand contact from use (e.g., condiments such as ketchup bottles and salt/pepper shakers, straws, napkin holders, etc.). Use single-use items when possible.

13. Use wrapped silverware and do not preset tables.

14. Use a fresh glass or cup for every refill and remove used glasses from the table or bars frequently.

15. Have customers box their own leftovers.

16. Close play areas, arcade rooms, playgrounds, etc.

17. Remove shared board games, cards and toys.

18. Position workstations so workers avoid standing directly opposite one another or next to each other.

19. Use communication boards or digital messaging to convey pre-shift meeting information rather than holding staff meetings.

GENERAL FOOD SAFETY

Businesses that have been closed or operating at a reduced capacity

1. Check expiration dates and discard all food items that are out of date or spoiled.

2. Verify that refrigeration and freezers are operating at the required temperatures.

3. Verify your warewashing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.

4. Flush water lines, including equipment water lines and connections, according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

5. Clean and sanitize ice machines and ice bins.

All businesses

1. Follow the requirements of the Minnesota Food Code.

2. Suspend self-service food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations until further notice.

3. If providing a “grab and go” service, stock coolers to no more than minimum levels.

4. Ensure handwashing sinks are accessible and fully stocked with soap, paper towels, handwashing sign, and trash bins.

5. Ensure the person in charge is a Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) and that their certification is up to date.

6. Provide food handler training to refresh employees.
Appendix A – Guidance for developing an Employer Preparedness Plan

General
Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus
State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – mn.gov/covid19
ASHRAE- COVID-19 Preparedness Resources: www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources

Businesses
MDH: Materials for businesses and employers: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials
Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 – www.dli.mn.gov/updates
Federal OSHA: www.osha.gov
AIHA Back to Work Safely: www.backtowork-safely.org

Handwashing
MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcccg

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze
CDC: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html

Social distancing
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html
American Institute of Architects Minnesota (AIA): Opportunities related to utilizing streets for purposes of outdoor dining, and case study with layouts specific to an area of the City of Robbinsdale (Roehr/Schmitt Architecture LLC): www.aia-mn.org
American Institute of Architects Minnesota (AIA): Pre-COVID-19 restaurant and bar design and reworked layout providing for required social distancing for customers and workers. (Cunningham Group Architecture Inc.) www.aia-mn.org

Housekeeping

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID 19
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhealthscreen.pdf
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

Training
MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf

Food service employee health and hygiene
Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist (MDH) (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhealthscreen.pdf)
Illness Reporting for Food Establishments (MDH) (www.health.state.mn.us/people/foodsafety/dwi/empillsf.pdf)
MN Symptom Screener (mnsymptomscreener.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/)

Food service employee reopening training

Food establishment reopening guidance
Best Practices for Re-Opening Retail Food Establishments During the COVID-19 Pandemic Infographic (FDA) (www.fda.gov/media/137868/download)

Minnesota Food Code, MN Rules 4626 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4626/)

Cleaning, Disinfecting and Sanitizing
List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (EPA) (www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)


Cleaning and Sanitizing (MDH) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/docs/fs/cleansanfs.pdf)


MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf

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Cleaning and Sanitizing (MDH) (www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/docs/fs/cleansanfs.pdf)