



GOVERNMENT OF
THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER



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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:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [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:
 - 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.
 - **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](#), 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.

1st Warning Written Citation

2nd Violation will result in a fine

3rd Violation will result in a Citation and a Closure for a period not to exceed 7 calendar days.

4th. If establishment continues to be non-compliance after exhausting 1, 2, and 3, then suspension of Business License and Health Permit may occur.