

# *southcarolina* **STR****NG**

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**GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY**



**South Carolina – Opening Restaurants  
Updated Guidance and Regulations  
Updated March 1, 2021**

As part of the ongoing process of facilitating economic recovery and revitalization in a safe, strategic, and incremental manner, the State of South Carolina should continue to encourage effective “social distancing” practices and implement additional targeted mandates and narrowly tailored emergency measures to combat and control the spread of COVID-19.

Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-63 issued by Governor McMaster to remain in effect until rescinded.

Governor McMaster granted all state, county and local officials the power to enforce these provisions along with other provisions from past or future executive orders during this state of emergency.

**Required Signage on Entry Doors:**

- No one with a fever or persistent cough is permitted in the restaurant. This includes employees, patrons and suppliers/vendors.
- All employees and customers shall:
  - Wear a face covering, as feasible
  - Not enter if they feel generally unwell
  - Sneeze or cough into a cloth or tissue
  - Not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact

**Post in a publicly prominent place in your facility your commitment to:**

- Food safety
- Staff safety training
- Cleaning and sanitizing
- Steps that you are taking to go above and beyond in providing safe food and a safe, enjoyable dining experience
- Customer safety
- Customer responsibility

These signs and others can be downloaded from the DHEC website.

**The following steps are to be followed in order to safely operate and build the trust of our customers:**

### **Cleaning and Sanitizing:**

- Create, execute and maintain a strict cleaning and sanitizing protocol. Use CDC Cleaning and Disinfecting guidance.

### **Training:**

- All restaurants are required to meet the minimum education and training standards outlined in DHEC Regulation 61-25. At least one employee with the authority to direct and control food preparation and service shall be a food protection manager who has been certified by an accredited program. Only Conference for Food Protection ANSI-certified Food Protection Manager courses meet the requirements.
- Continue and enhance employee safety training, highly emphasizing proper hand washing and hygiene etiquette. Educate employees about when they should stay home and when they can return to work.
- For those operations with carry out and delivery service, have employees take the Free ServSafe COVID-19 training for carryout and delivery service.

### **Required Face Coverings:**

- All restaurants employees and patrons must have a face covering (cloth mask or face shield), as feasible.
- Face Coverings must be worn when not seated ie: walking into the establishment, going to the restroom or moving about the restaurant.
- Provide information to staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. Face covering should be placed and worn over the mouth and nose.
- Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
  - Babies and children younger than 2 years old
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
  - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
  - Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or personal protective equipment.
- Learn more on how to properly use the cloth face coverings at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

## **Food Safety and Restaurant Dining Room Focus:**

- Restaurants should space indoor and outdoor tables at least six (6) feet apart, to the extent possible, to ensure that customers and patrons are at least six (6) feet apart from any other party or group.
- In self-service seating restaurants, place signage on tables/booths which are not to be occupied so that proper social distancing can be maintained.
- Restaurants should limit seating each table to no more than 8 customers and patrons, exclusive of family units or members of the same household.
- Restaurants should adopt and enforce a process to ensure that customers and patrons are able to maintain a minimum of six (6) feet of separation from other parties while waiting to be seated. If there is any indoor or outdoor waiting area, Restaurants should use tape or other markings to help customers and patrons identify and maintain a minimum of six (6) feet of separation from other parties.
- Restaurants should not allow patrons and customers to stand or congregate in any bar area. Restaurants should remove bar stools or arrange them in a manner that will ensure that customers and patrons are able to maintain a minimum of six (6) feet of separation from other parties.
- Discontinue self-service buffets or food stations to prevent customers and patrons from reusing service utensils to avoid potential physical contamination; however, employees may be permitted to dispense food via cafeteria-style buffet service. (See additional guidance document for standards and protocols)
- Restaurants should minimize, modify, or discontinue services that allow customers and patrons to fill or refill their own beverage cups.
- Encourage guests to wait outside the restaurant or in an area that can properly socially distance, use tape or markings to delineate six feet physical distance.
- Create a plan and checklist of all back of house and front of house surfaces the staff and customers will come in contact with to facilitate cleaning and disinfecting.
- Select one person per shift to be in charge of safety and sanitation during the shift, observing and ensuring that hand washing is done appropriately, and sanitation of dining room areas, restrooms, lobbies and door areas is done regularly and consistently.
- Continue to adhere to cleaning and sanitizing requirements in SC Regulation 61-25, Retail Food Establishments.
- Provide a cleaning station with alcohol-based hand sanitizer, tissues, and a trash can for visitors.
- Do not place utensils on table until patron is seated and, if possible, use disposable single-use utensils.

- Remove common-use condiments, such as salt, pepper, and ketchup, from tables. These items should be provided upon request and cleaned and sanitized between uses if single-use options are not available.
- Clean and disinfect, using approved sanitizing solution, tables, chairs, reusable menus and check presenters after each use.
- Use disposable paper menus or a QR code technology for no-touch menu if possible. Reusable menus should be sanitized after each use.
- Sanitize all doorknobs and other frequently touched surfaces as much as possible between newly arriving parties with approved sanitizing solution.
- Cleaning supplies should be single use (paper towels, disposable mop heads) or laundered between uses (dish towels, mop heads).
- Have diners wait for tables in cars or outdoors using social distancing regulations rather than congregating in the entrance area, bar or dining room. Use SMS/text technology to inform them when their table is available.
- If kiosks or touch screens are used, clean and sanitize between uses, encourage touchless payment operations like credit cards with no signature required.

### **Sale of Alcoholic Beverages:**

- ~~The sale or consumption of beer, wine, or alcoholic liquor on the licensed premises of all persons or businesses authorized to sell beer, wine, or alcoholic liquor in the State of South Carolina (collectively, “Licensees”), as set forth below, is prohibited between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. the following day.~~
- The Governor rescinded this measure effective Monday March 1, 2021.  
<https://governor.sc.gov/news/2021-02/gov-henry-mcmaster-lift-last-call-order-large-gatherings-approval-process>

### **Employee Safety Focus:**

- Follow CDC and DHEC guidelines regarding employee health.
- Actively encourage and require employees who are sick, who have symptoms of COVID-19, who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have recently had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to stay at home, and should develop policies to encourage any such employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal or adverse employment action on this basis.
- Immediately excuse and exclude any employees indicating symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the preceding fourteen (14) days.

- Employee health screens shall be conducted prior to or at the beginning of each shift, an employee survey and screening process, which should include taking each employee's temperature before they begin their shift and inquiring about common symptoms of COVID-19.
- Heightened hygienic practices including peer observation and supervisor oversight to ensure staff are washing hands frequently and correctly, proper glove usage when used, and that staff avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Provide physical barriers such as Plexiglas between employees and customers when possible for counter service ordering, food pick up areas and host stands.
- Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, mobile and menu tablets, text on arrival for seating and contactless payment options.
- Immediately exclude any staff members indicating symptoms or that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone diagnosed COVID-19.
- All employees handling ready to eat food should wear gloves. This is not just for the safety of our guests, but also for their psychological sense of safety. Where gloves are not used, follow requirements in R.61-25 Retail Food Establishments.