



DineSafe

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR REOPENING
AND CREATING GUEST & STAFF COMFORT

*A resource created by the Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association
in collaboration with a committee of government & industry leaders.*

DineSafe.ca



In this Guide

INTRODUCTION	4
RESTAURANT GUEST FLOW	7
Entrance 7	
Tables & Seating 8	
Menus & Guest Ordering 9	
Staff Ordering 9	
Dining 10	
Bars & Beverage Stations 10	
Bill & Payment 11	
Restrooms 11	
Take-out & Delivery 12	
STAFF	14
KITCHEN	14
SOURCING	14
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	14
REOPENING RESOURCES	15
GOING FORWARD	16

DINESAFE CHECKLIST | [CLICK TO DOWNLOAD](#)
a summary of the recommendations in this guide.

Introduction

To understand how to best navigate this unprecedented time and support restaurant and foodservice operators, the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association (ORHMA) has been working closely with industry leaders, government agencies, technology experts, legal advisors and key supply partners. Together, we have developed DineSafe, a catalogue of best practices to help guide your safe and successful reopening.

Focusing on processes that protect staff and guests and exceed health and safety expectations, this guide aims to provide the roadmap to restaurant recovery. By following these recommendations, we can each design safe, welcoming spaces that inspire public trust, so our industry can not only survive but thrive.

More specifically, this practical guide to reopening is organized in the flow of a typical guest experience, and it outlines required and desired health and safety deliverables, as well as elements you should uniquely consider for your particular operations.

While we may have to modify our approach and update our spaces, two core elements of our business remain: our dedication to looking after our teams and our guests; and our mission to provide safe and memorable dining experiences—ones guests want to return to and want to tell others about. Today, more than ever before, we have the opportunity to demonstrate our collective commitment to hospitality excellence.

Recognizing the situation is quickly evolving, ORHMA is continuing to collaborate with the Province of Ontario, as well as other industry suppliers and specialists, and will continue to provide you with updated tools and resources. We are here to assist you and the industry in any way we can, and welcome any questions, recommendations or requests you may have.

SUMMARY

Guests and staff alike will be evaluating every element of the experience—from approaching the restaurant and being seated to dining and paying—more critically throughout the reopening transition. With guests first visiting experimentally, they will be assessing how safe and enjoyable their experience was, and will likely share their impression with others. This is your opportunity to make a positive, lasting impact.

As an operator and a leader, it is imperative you adopt a thoughtful approach, with a “touchless and distanced” environment being the new ideal. In this guide, ORHMA has compiled the widely accepted best practices for your consideration.

This is a new paradigm for the restaurant and foodservice industry as a whole. Individually and as a collective, we will be most successful if we recognize that behaviours, motivations and expectations have changed; and we adapt to and embrace our new reality.





Restaurant Guest Flow

CONSIDERATIONS FOR OPERATORS

1. ENTRANCE Welcoming guests in, and inspiring confidence

We're excited to welcome guests back in—and with a high standard of warm hospitality. In the current climate, this means we want their first impression to establish comfort, ensuring guests are confident they're entering a safe space. To help guests feel taken care from their first steps, consider the follow recommendations:

- To prevent the need to use handles, add an attachment to your main doors, if possible.
- Provide hand sanitizer at your entranceway or hostess stand, ideally through a touchless dispenser. Encourage guests to use the sanitizer on their way in.
- To limit potential distancing challenges, introduce a one-way flow of guests for entering and exiting, and use directional signage, if possible.
- Feature a transparent barrier for your host stand, if appropriate.
- Have gloves available to staff at your hostess stand.
- To encourage guests to maintain reasonable distance from others, apply spacing stickers on your floors. *Tip: ensure floor is completely clean and dry before application.*
- To avoid grouping in the vestibule, have an appropriate number of staff available to seat guests quickly, and consider other systems, such as texting guests when their tables are ready. If congregation occurs, ask any guests who cannot safely maintain distance to wait outside until space opens.
- Consider using temperature check systems for guests.
- To help build trust, post a list of measures your establishment is taking to protect your guests and staff. To provide additional comfort for areas not seen by guests for which trepidation may exist, take extra care to highlight the back of house safety measures.

2.

TABLES & SEATING

Phase 1: Reduced occupancy & smaller group sizes

While we are currently awaiting official Provincial guidelines, we recommend limiting occupancy and welcoming only more intimate groups for the first phase of reopening. This means we need to be strategic with how we reconfigure our tables and seating, accommodating spacing and optimizing our environments.

- To prevent confusion and increase spacing, remove furniture not in use, where possible. *Tip: many tabletops can be easily removed from bases for easier storage.*
- For tables that cannot be removed, prepare signage to indicate they are not in use and, where possible, remove seating not being used.
- Creatively style not-in-use tables, helping guests differentiate them while also providing enhanced ambiance and warmth.
- Limit items on in-use tables.
- Provide condiments in single-use disposable packages or in individual ramekins during service to avoid bottles, shakers or other pieces multiple people may touch.
- To provide additional comfort, consider using paper table wrap that is replaced between seatings, if appropriate.
- Set cutlery, including roll-ups if used, only after guests are seated.



3.

MENUS & GUEST ORDERING

Limiting the use of menus that have to change hands

- With reduced initial volumes of guests, as well as potential limitations for available, supplies consider a reduced menu offering that allows you to operate effectively and profitably.
- Contact your suppliers and distributors to confirm availability of ingredients. The recent period of closure may have caused supply challenges.
- To combat the risks of menus being handled by multiple guests, consider the following alternative approaches:
 - Post your up-to-date menu offering on your existing website, ideally on a mobile friendly page.
 - Create a QR barcode directed to the menu-specific webpage, and post it in your establishment. *Tip: no cost QR creators are readily available online at websites, like [the-qrcode-generator.com](https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com).*
 - Consider replacing chalkboards with digital signage.
 - Print disposable menus and/or placemat-style menus.

4.

STAFF ORDERING

Empowering staff to maintain space while ordering

- Provide all staff with personal stylus pens for POS system use.
- Permit only one staff member per station.
- To ensure staff safety, have each staff member wipes and sanitizes all surfaces they have come into contact with before moving on.
- Have gloves and sanitizer available to staff at all stations.
- Install additional ordering terminals or add additional mobile units, if feasible.
- Install digital displays for your kitchen to receive orders, if feasible.
- Consider implementing new technology to facilitate touchless ordering, such as guest self-ordering systems. *Tip: check with your POS system provider to learn about available technology.*

5.

DINING

Considering every step of service during showtime

- This is the moment of truth. To ensure your team is prepared and guests are comfortable, develop a plan for the following the following the potential service pain points:
 - How will you place and clear plates and drinks from the table?
 - How will you approach placing and clearing for wall adjacent seating, where a guest is seated away from server access?
- Consider offering packaged cutlery to guests who prefer it.
- Place dishes directly on the tables; avoid passing them to guests.
- Refills should not be done tableside. Beverages should be replaced with new ones, if needed.
- During coffee service, use packaged milk/creamers/sugar/sweetener—brought to table and discarded after service.
- Staff should wash or sanitize hands between all guest table tasks.
- Keep music levels low enough to allow for comfortable guest conversations while distanced.

6.

BARS & BEVERAGE STATIONS

Spacing seating and assigning clear roles

- Reconfigure your bar seating, considering spacing between stools and between staff and guests. If safe spacing cannot be maintained, your bar seating may not be suitable during the reopening transition.
- Reduce beverage selections to keep products, such as draught, fresh, if needed.
- Remove all shared service bar items.
- Bartenders should garnish and provide fully the completed drinks.
- Consider assigning specific staff to manage your beverage station during peak periods, or having only the bartender serve all soft drinks.
- To further limit touch points, consider having bartenders wear gloves and/or placing completed drinks directly on trays.
- Have gloves available to staff at all stations.



7. BILL & PAYMENT

Leaving a good impression with this critical step

We want guests' last memories of their meals to be reassuring. To ensure they leave feeling both safe and satisfied, carefully consider your current practices of providing the bill and collecting payment.

- If your payment system does not currently accommodate touch-free payments either by card or phone, contact your payment processing provider for an update.
- For cashless payments, bring the terminal to your guest with gloves on, and visibly wipe down and sanitize it when the transaction is complete.
- If payments are made through servers, consider touchless methods, such as tapping with cards or phones.
- Develop a plan for collecting gratuities and finalizing payments, such as having staff inquire or providing guests with disposable sticks/styluses to make selections with.
- If payments are made at a central cashier, install a plexiglass barrier. Also, replace wired payment terminals with wireless ones to increase access, and use touchless methods wherever possible.

8.

RESTROOMS

Touchless is king

- Consider touchless flushers and faucets, if not already in place.
- Consider touchless paper towel dispensers, if not already in place. Guests may be particularly uncomfortable with high-velocity dryers aerating spaces.
- Limit occupancy, and post signage to clarify your updated policy.
- Consider restricting urinal usage by spacing or closure.
- Ensure frequent cleaning is done and documented, and post records.
- Strategically place wastebaskets to collect paper towel that guests may use to open doorways.
- Provide hand sanitizer at bathroom exit areas, even if simply on a table or chair.

9.

TAKE-OUT & DELIVERY

Designating an area or delivering directly

- To avoid congestion in full-service restaurants, designate an area for order pick-ups.
- If this is not possible, have staff deliver orders outside of your main doors to keep your entrance clear.



Staff

Your team members, the faces of your business, are integral to your operations. Their safety and wellbeing should be a key priority. To keep your staff comfortable and healthy, consider the following:

- Designate one key staff member to serve as your health and safety leader, who will be prepared to share and review processes and best practice, and answer questions. Similarly, designate one key staff member on every shift to oversee the cleaning and sanitation thoroughness.
- Consider having all staff members complete the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe Reopening Guidance: COVID-19 Precautions training video prior to returning, ensuring the entire team is familiar with the basics. Currently offered without cost, it provides a video learning module and will automatically issue a certificate following viewing. Register to [view the video on-demand here](#).
- Should a staff member have any symptoms, they should be expected to stay at home.
- Prior to their first shift back, each team member should sign a declaration, acknowledging the expectation that they will not come to work and will follow a specific notification process with the management, should they be at risk of having COVID-19. This includes if: they have any symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, cough, shortness of breath; have been in contact with COVID-19; and/or have travelled and are currently subject to 14-day quarantine. [Download a sample declaration here](#).
- Consider pre-shift temperature checks for all staff with contactless thermometers. If used, this should be recorded and filed. Official direction on this is still being considered by the Ontario Ministry of Health.
- Consider masks or face visors for front of house staff, as well as for back of house staff when they expect to be within two metres of each other.
- Consider posting a sign on your doors, requesting guests with symptoms of COVID-19 to refrain from entering the restaurant and to instead opt for takeout or delivery. Include messaging that clarifies that your establishment has the right to refuse service to anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms in order to protect your other guests and staff.
- Develop a clear communications plan, should you or one of your team members feel compelled to refuse service to a guest displaying COVID-19 symptoms. This message should be delivered by a manager or supervisor.

Kitchen

Understandably, guests may worry most about what they can't see. Take great care to maintain a safe kitchen, and consider implementing the following recommendations:

- Use timers to remind staff to wash hands at 30-minute or other specific intervals.
- To encourage safe distancing, mark the floors with spacing stickers. Consider mandating kitchen staff who may have to work in closer quarters (within 2 metres), including food preparation staff and cooks, to wear masks or face shields.
- To limit contact on orders, designate a food expeditor, who will serve as the singular assembler of table orders for server delivery.
- To promote guest comfort, publicly share the back of house safety measures being taken.

Sourcing

Thorough investigation into various sources for offerings, especially of personal protective equipment, has recently be done. We strongly advise that you discuss item availability with your existing suppliers, and where needed, consider alternative suppliers who are already established in the industry. Avoid those who have newly emerged, with items of questionable quality, inflated pricing or minimum order requirements. Should you require support on sourcing particular items, please contact us and we will be happy to assist. You may also find updated sourcing resources at DineSafe.ca.

Other

- Consider featuring a notice on your online reservation system, prompting guests to confirm that no one in their party has been exposed to or is experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Ensure you have sufficient supplies to accommodate increased printing demands.
- Record all visitors, including vendors and service provides, and times in case needed for future contact tracing efforts.

Reopening Resources

more at:

DineSafe.ca

KEY RESOURCES & LINKS

- **ORHMA:**
 - **DineSafe Checklist (reopening best practices): [download here](#)**
 - **Additional sources of services, PPE and other key info: [view here](#)**
- Ecolab Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures: [view here](#)
- National Restaurant Association's ServSafe Reopening Guidance: COVID-19 Precautions & other training videos: [watch here](#)
- Sysco Foodservice: SnapBack Toolkit: [view here](#) | PPE Info: [view here](#)
- Gordon Food Service: COVID-19 Resources - [view here](#) | PPE Info - [view here](#)
- Flanagan Foodservice COVID-19 Resources: [view here](#)
- Legal and HR Policies: [view here](#)
- Tourism HR Canada Recovery Toolkit: [view here](#)
- The Dollars and Sense of Reopening: [view here](#)

For a full list of resources, visit: DineSafe.ca/resources



Going Forward

A PUBLIC CAMPAIGN

ORHMA is in discussions with industry partners over the consideration of a public campaign to assist in awareness and reinforcement of safety measures to dine out. We are considering a branded sticker program, which confirms operators' commitments to a specific level of standards.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

We are all in this together. ORHMA, our team members and our Board of Directors are here to support the needs of the industry and provide assistance to operators. Together, we will demonstrate our commitment to provide safe, comfortable dining experiences to past and future guests, and will rebuild a strong vibrant Foodservice Industry. It will take work and time, but there is no industry more resilient than ours.

Please check regularly for updated resources at DineSafe.ca, and if you have questions or require assistance, please email us at info@orhma.com.

Dine safe,



Tony Elenis
President and CEO, ORHMA

Special thanks

ORHMA wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the significant contributions that were made in the creation of this guide:

CONTENT CURATION:

JASON CHESKES, Hospitality Advisor & ORHMA Board Member

abovethelinesolutions.com

LAYOUT AND EDITING:

MARY ANNE TERRY, Writer, Designer & Marketer

maryanneterry.com

ORHMA STAFF:

FATIMA FINNEGAN, Director of Corporate Marketing & Business Development

CHRISTINA DIROCCO, Member Care & Communications Manager

DINESAFE COMMITTEE:

TONY ELENIS, Co-Chair, ORHMA

CYRUS COOPER, Co-Chair, Centennial College

Full list of contributing committee members on the following page.

MEET THE DINESAFE COMMITTEE

TONY ELENIS, Co-Chair, ORHMA

CYRUS COOPER, Co-Chair, Centennial College

JOSEPH MOORE, Caesar's Windsor

JEFF DOVER, fsSTRATEGY Inc.

KELLY O'BRIEN, Durham College

ALOK SHARMA, City of Toronto

ANTHONY AMALFA, Advance Public Health Consulting

AL RAJAN, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment

JIM PETERS, Responsible Hospitality Institute

FILIPPO MANCUSO, Mosto Foods

LEE JACKSON, JLL Real Estate

DAVE HIGH, Ecolab

MARK ELLIS, Baker Mackenzie LLP

MIKE O'CONNOR, Quinn's Steakhouse & Shopsy's Deli

JEFF BERMAN, ChefWorks Canada

MICHAEL THALASSINOS, Silverware POS

ADAM MORRISON, OTEC

JASON CHESKES, Above the Line Solutions

MARY ANNE TERRY, Writer & Content Creator

Please note: The Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) has provided this document and associated resources in an effort to help operators with guidance items. Contents are recommendations only and ORHMA does not accept any liability for matters related to such guidance or application of guidance. Any matters related to operation of an establishment in regards to compliance with established or forthcoming regulations should be reviewed with qualified legal representatives. All recommendations in this document are subject to change based on government requirements pending.

HAVE QUESTIONS OR WANT TO CHAT?

Be in touch.

ADDRESS

Ontario Restaurant Hotel
& Motel Association
(ORHMA)

2600 Skymark Avenue,
Suite 8-201
Mississauga, L4W 5B2

PHONE

905.361.0268
800.668.8906

EMAIL

info@orhma.com



DineSafe.ca

orhma.com



DineSafe