



Ready, Set, Reopen!

Best practice resource for **Restaurants**

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Reopening requires planning to not only survive, but thrive. For local restaurants, we've distilled the key steps for a safe reopening. Here are three steps to take:

- 01 Put safety first**
- 02 Ready your employees**
- 03 Adapt your services**



Before digging in...

Review the most up-to-date State and/or County Order on reopening requirements for your industry. We've included many of the requirements listed in the City and County of Honolulu Mayor's Emergency Order No. 2020-13 Second Amendment, issued on May 21, 2020. These requirements are marked with an asterisk (*) at the time of this writing.

01. Put Safety First

Restaurants must create a safe working environment that gives employees confidence to return to work, and customers confidence to eat. Properly disinfecting your entire business and designing customer-facing areas that work is critical. Here's what we suggest you do:



Pre-clean. Plus establish your ongoing cleaning plan

- Review [OSHA](#) and [CDC](#) guidelines for **detailed guidance** and disinfecting how-to's.
- **Order cleaning supplies and [EPA-approved](#) disinfectants** and maintain at least a 30-day inventory.
- **Thoroughly clean and disinfect** your business *before* you reopen.
- Create an **ongoing cleaning schedule for all areas** (e.g. between customers, hourly, daily, or weekly)
- **Hourly touch-point sanitization** (workstations, equipment, screens, door knobs, restrooms) are required.*
- **Tables and chairs must be fully sanitized** after each group or individual customer leaves the restaurant.*
- **Avoid food contact** when using disinfectants.
- You must **provide hand-washing capability or sanitizer** for employees and customers with an adequate amount of soap, disinfectant, hand sanitizer and paper towels at all times.*
- **Frequent hand washing/sanitizing** by employees is required.*
- **Add hand sanitizer stations**, preferably touchless, at entrances/exits/checkout.
- Follow **OSHA/HIOSH guidelines** for proper labeling, use and storage of chemicals.
- Have an enhanced cleaning plan ready should a **positive COVID-19 case** be reported.



Create appropriate PPE & physical distancing rules

- **Require the use of masks/face coverings*** as follows:
 - **Employees** who interact with customers are required to wear masks during their shift.
 - **Cooks and kitchen staff** who do not interact with the public are encouraged but not required to wear masks. **Customers** must wear face coverings when entering and leaving the restaurant, but may remove them while seated.
- **Post signage** to communicate key distancing rules and reminders in high-traffic areas. In tight workspaces, like the kitchen, spread prep out, physically or by schedule.
- Designate **one location for any deliveries**, require all vendors to wear face masks, disinfect all items, and only allow vendors to enter when escorted by an employee.



Determine product handling & limit shared equipment

- **Determine standards** for product handling (e.g. packing food for delivery, serving food to a table) so that it limits employee contact.
- **Provide condiments by request only** in single-use disposable packets. Or, if you provide reusable condiment containers, they must be sanitized between parties.*
- **Non-disposable dishware and utensils must be sanitized after each use** consistent with Hawaii Department of Health guidance and regulations, and [best practices of the U.S. F.D.A.](#)*
- **Provide disposable menus or menu boards, or sanitize reusable menus after each use.***
- **No self-service buffets or drink stations are allowed.***
- Consider “**contactless**” **checkout options** e.g. pick-up/curbside, self-checkout or contactless payment options.
- **Limit sharing equipment.** Consider assigning a set of equipment/tools per person, per shift.
- If sharing items is necessary, **post clear directions** about how to clean shared-use equipment.



Reorganize your floor plan and traffic flow

- **Ensure 6 feet of separation** is maintained between dining groups.*
- **Add floor markers** in waiting areas to help with distancing.
- **Designate specific entrances and exits** to control traffic and reduce contact.
- **Install safeguards** to prevent transmission of airborne particles that may carry the virus e.g. plexiglass or get creative with economical barriers like clear, thick plastic
- **Establish paths** (e.g. one-way, clockwise) to minimize proximity for customers and employees.
- If your restaurant is taking advantage of the **pilot sidewalk dining/outdoor privilege** in Honolulu County, make sure to review and abide by all the conditions listed in the Mayor’s Order.*



Limit the number of people in a closed space

- **Reduce store occupancy** based on county and state capacity rules. Establish an occupancy monitoring protocol to maintain appropriate capacity.
- **Group dining** must be limited to a maximum of ten (10) individuals per group.*
- **Adapt breakrooms/waiting areas** for social distancing and **stagger breaks to prevent crowding.**

02. Ready your employees

The return to work will introduce new norms and uncertainties for your team. Keeping the communication lines open is crucial to ensuring a smooth reopening. Take care of your employees and they'll take care of your customers and each other.

Energize and build trust with your people



- Reconnect employees to your **culture and brand values**.
- **Address employee concerns** with compassion and confidence.
- **Confirm schedules, salaries, benefits and HR policies** and highlight/explain changes.
- **Proactively seek feedback** from employees and include them to brainstorm solutions.
- **Revisit HR and safety policies**, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, such as temporary workers, people with disabilities, single parents or those who lack adequate health benefits.
- Find creative ways to **support employee well-being** during this crisis.

Clearly communicate and train staff on your “new normal”



- Communicate **clearly, early, often, and with compassion**.
- **Provide training** on new operations and hygiene requirements and your Covid-19 mitigation plan, as defined by your State and County order.*
- **Find alternatives to in-person meetings**, like communication boards, text or video.
- **Make it clear** that employees displaying symptoms of COVID-19 are not allowed to service customers. Symptomatic or ill employees should not report to work.*
- You are required to **conduct pre-shift screening** and **maintain a staff screening log***. We recommend implementing a daily sign-in sheet to certify that they are healthy to work and [post a notice](#) at your entrance to remind employees to self-evaluate that they are healthy to work. Consider temperature checks if practical.
- Remind employees of **good hygiene basics**. Let them know that washing their hands properly and frequently are required.
- **Review expectations** for routine cleaning and sanitizing of high-touch areas.
- Create easy ways for employees to **maintain social distancing** e.g. 6-ft tables at the front door take-out station, point out easy markers like six 1-ft tiles on the floor.
- Clearly communicate **expectations for mask/PPE use/disposal** and **consequences** for not abiding. Discuss **who/how to handle customers** who don't want to wear masks or abide by the social distancing guidelines while in your establishment.
- Educate employees on your plan for handling **suspected/confirmed cases** of Covid-19 and what steps they should take if they experience symptoms or feel sick.

Prepare & post signage!



- [Post a notice](#) on **entrances** that no one with Covid-19 symptoms are permitted to enter.
- **Use floor markings** and **physical items** to direct traffic in all areas, including waiting, seating, and restroom areas.
- **At registers/checkout**, reminding people to disinfect hands and use contact free payments
- **In break rooms**, post signs reminding staff to maintain safety and social distancing guidelines.
- **In restrooms and kitchen**, post signs reminding staff to wash hands properly and often.

03. Adapt Your Services

Whether your business is brand new or generations old, reopening in the “new normal” presents an opportunity to rethink how you operate. Here are some things to solve for as you adjust your business priorities and strategy for reopening.

Reimagine new products & services

- Focus on **top sellers** and highlight your **highest margin** goods. Know what will sell **immediately**. And know what will sell **consistently** over 2+ months.
- Consider introducing **specialty menu items, or branded masks** into product assortment.
- Create **pre-packaged bundles** to move more product e.g. prix-fixe menus, family packs, cocktails-to-go, subscription meal boxes.
- Build a pre-order strategy or promote **gift cards** (or digital gift cards) for an immediate infusion of cash.
- Capitalize on **seasonal opportunities** e.g. Father’s Day specials, Fourth of July barbecue kits.
- Turn distancing rules and regulations into creative **brand moments and opportunities** e.g. branded hand sanitizers, fun floor signs.

Meet your customers where they are

- **Reach out and talk to loyal customers** to understand what is important to them.
- **Focus on benefits**, not just discounts.
- **Re-engage all existing customers** across all channels, especially email and social media.
- **Spread the word**, ask loyal patrons to increase awareness for your good/service among friends and family.
- Ease consumers back into shopping by marketing **delivery, curbside pickup, and special hours**.
- Consider **special hours** or shopping by appointment for high-risk individuals.
- Get creative with **menu sizes** to meet various needs e.g. kids meals, large family catering service.
- Identify **partnerships or collaborators** to extend your reach to new customers through cross-promotion. For example, work with neighboring businesses to jointly attract traffic to all your businesses together.

Leverage technology when possible

- **Keep building and investing in your online channels** to complement your brick-and-mortar.
- Share brand values, products or create “social experiences” on **social media**.
- Explore selling on **Instagram** e.g. market daily menus and allow customers to place an order.
- Use technology to track # of customers in store, or send text notifications for when orders are ready.
- Sign up for an **app** to help with self-checkout, ordering and delivery options
- Minimize the use of paper and **migrate to digital** e.g. digital receipts, online inventory
- **Allow remote work** when possible and **use alternative forms of communication** like video or text to minimize in-person training and meetings.

A Note from ProService Hawaii:

Restaurants have changed, it will not be business as usual. Our "new normal" will look very different from what we've known it to be. Recovery will require new business models and revenue streams, new staff relations, new relationships with our business partners, suppliers, landlords and customers. It will take a long time to arrive at our “new normal.” Anticipating and preparing for this new business environment will take innovation, patience, and a whole lot of grit. **You’ve got this.**

Sources:

- [Honolulu Mayor's Emergency Order No. 2020-13](#), City and County of Honolulu
- [COVID-19 Re-Opening Guidance](#), Hawaii Restaurant Association
- [Restaurant Industry Blueprint for Recovery](#), National Restaurant Association
- [Businesses and Workplace Guidance](#), Center for Disease Control
- [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#), Environmental Protection Agency
- [Executive Series: 1:1 with Bill Tobin](#), ProService Hawaii
- [Executive Series: CEO Roundtable - Ep. 1 Restaurants](#), ProService Hawaii
- [Employer's Guide to Coronavirus](#), ProService Hawaii