



Senior Living
Dining Facility

RECOVERY BLUEPRINT

A Guide To Ease Patient, Visitor
and Staff Concerns

This presentation is guidance only. It does not constitute legal, medical or safety advice, nor is it a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response.



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WHAT IS THIS FOR?

As senior living communities lift resident restrictions, a careful balance must be struck between allowing residents to socialize and maintaining their safety. Unlike discretionary dining services such as restaurants, residents rely on their community's facility as their primary source of food. Careful consideration must be made for quality, variety, and overall satisfaction, in addition to safety.

To support your planning efforts, we've developed guidance specific to reopening senior living dining facilities and providing in-room dining. We encourage you to familiarize yourselves with the foundational principles, suggested best practices, and provide examples from other food service environments as you determine what's best for your facility.

Every senior living community, and every resident is unique, and your experience will be nuanced. There is no single flowchart or checklist that can be applied. You will, of course, need to find and follow official laws and requirements from federal and state sources like the CDC, FDA, OSHA, local governor's office, and local health department as you craft your specific reopening plan.

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Federal & local guidelines generally provide reopening or recovery guidance in 5 key areas

Reopening or recovery guidelines come from many sources, including the federal government, CDC, FDA, OSHA, state and local governments, local departments of health, and trade organizations. They range from requirements in the form of laws, ordinances and executive orders to recommendations and evolving industry standards. This is true even from a single source: for example, some state regulations will include specific requirements for some issues and may say “consider,” “if feasible,” or “where practical” for others. All businesses are strongly encouraged to coordinate with state and local health officials so timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses. Local conditions will continue to influence the decisions public health officials make.

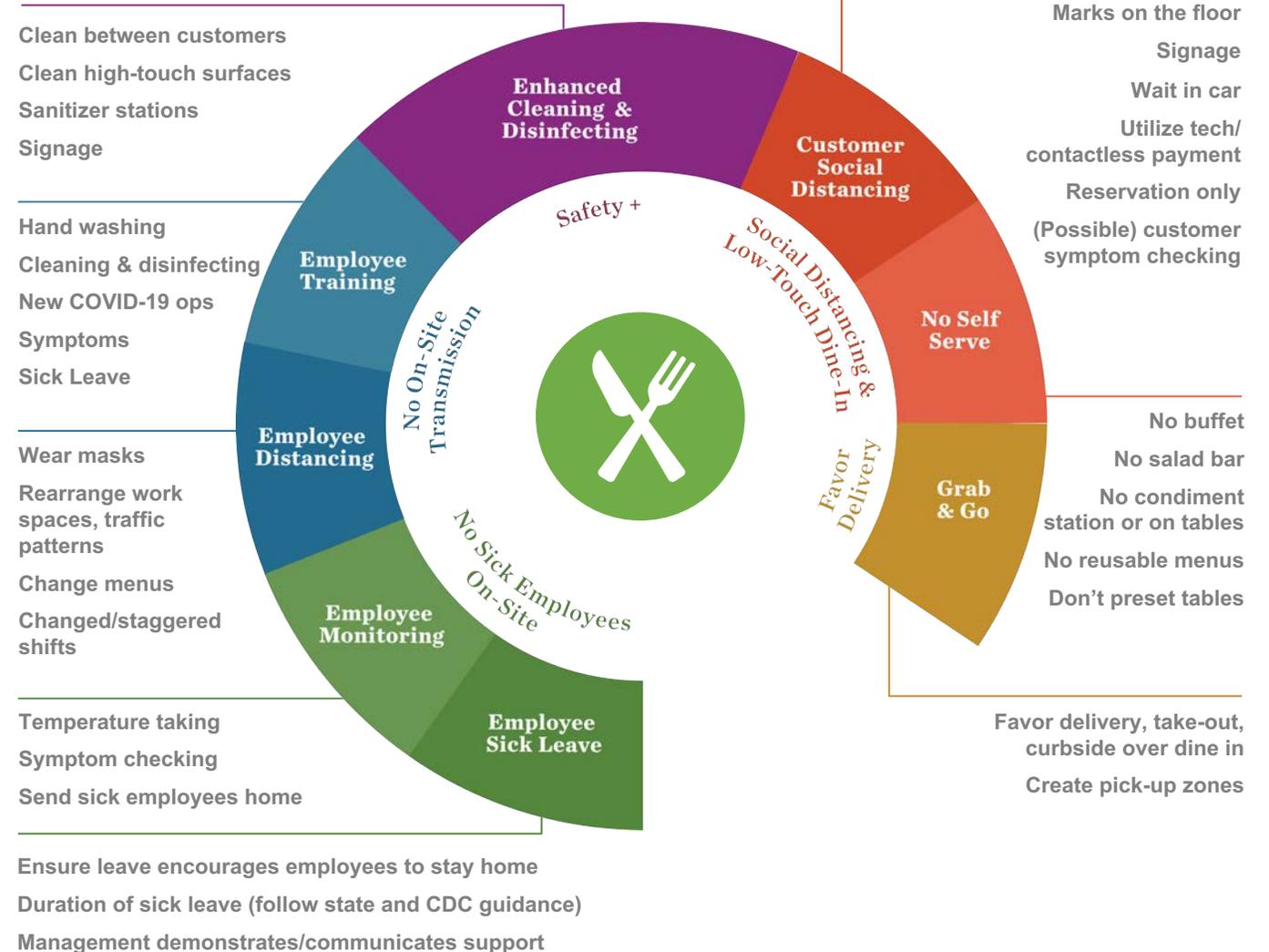
Although reopening or recovery guidelines come from a number of sources and differ geographically, there are common organizational schemes and general alignment across five general areas:

- No sick employees on-site
- Prevent on-site transmission
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting for safety
- Social distancing and low-touch for dine-in
- Favoring take-out/delivery

Thinking in these terms can make understanding and applying guidelines less daunting and complex.

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Your locale may advise or recommend that you:*

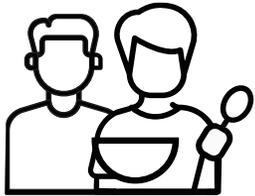


Note: Specific requirements may not apply to your location.

*Reflects guidance from sources published prior to May 5, 2020. Current guidance may vary.

We spoke to residents' families and staff at senior living facilities to understand their views

To best understand how COVID-19 has impacted perceptions of dining in senior living communities, it's important to listen to key groups. Through interviews with family, caregivers and staff, we were able to better understand what challenges and perceptions a Reopening Blueprint should address.



Family & Caregivers

Residents' families were concerned for their loved one's safety, especially considering their increased risk, however they were equally if not more concerned with their mental wellbeing while in isolation.

“It's not just about the dining. It's about the sociability. This is their time during the day to get together.”



Staff

Staff relationships with residents have suffered due to social distancing and mask wearing (the hard of hearing can't read lips). Responsibilities have shifted where kitchen staff are now delivering food, and janitorial staff have an increased burden in cleaning resident rooms due to in-room dining and disposables creating trash.

“Servers are used to chatting and being friendly. I'm less concerned about the food than people talking. That's a shame because that's a big deal.”

What we heard from our research participants...

Sociability is critical

Meal time is often the main time that residents get to socialize with each other. Residents tend to sit in predictable friend groups and seek out their friends when they enter the dining room. This causes a lot of wandering and exposure to more people.

Eating in isolation in their rooms takes a toll on mental wellbeing.

“It’s very boring eating in his room by himself. He misses going down to the dining room.”

“I would hope caregivers would guide the residents to their seat, and sit them next to their favorite resident.”

PC is easier

Dining services are overwhelmed by sanitizing incoming products and overseeing strict kitchen regulations. It’s easier for them to purchase pre-packaged meals from suppliers where facilities are regularly audited.

PC snacks and drinks are especially important for quickly providing options in between meals.

“I’d get it from a supplier... you could eat off the floor there.”

General Principles for Effective Reopening or Recovery

An appropriately planned reopening for dining establishments, generally, will be guided by the following principles:

1 Health & Well-Being

Food service establishments must demonstrate the importance placed on the health and well-being of their employees and customers. This may include posting policies including symptom checking, as well as publicizing employee measures (and support of employees) to customers. Help customers understand the new expectations and behave in safe ways.

2 Stay Nimble; Information is Fluid

This is a fluid environment and will evolve as things are tried, information is gathered, guidance from authorities changes, and customer responses are surveyed and understood. Be prepared to operate in an iterative way. Expect to make continuous adjustments and changes. Plan for multiple possible future scenarios. Observe results and track metrics.

3 Menu Dictates Space

A tighter, more focused menu allows food service operators to better plan labor and prep needs, and run a more sanitized kitchen. Refocus external communications to celebrate a carefully crafted, reduced menu. Focus on what you know diners will love, and tell a story that highlights what your establishment does best. Consider pre-selling items to anticipate capacity and plan your operations.

4 Trusted Provider

Embrace preparation and safety protocols as part of your establishment's story. Assert yourself as a safe public space/beacon/gathering place. Become a trusted local provider that builds loyalty & signifies safety through your sanitation rigor.

5 Buffered, Sealed Back of House

Maintain a distinct separation between FOH & BOH. Social distancing in BOH may be challenging, and the FOH is exposed to many variables. Use expeditors as a buffer between those who can touch food and those who cannot. Designate separate entrances for FOH and BOH employees. Signal separation through visual cues (glove colors, aprons, head covering color) and make customers aware that a plan is in place.

6 Buffered, Contactless Front of House

FOH needs multiple layers or barriers reinforced by products, furniture, and staff structure in order to support distancing by diners at every level. Main considerations include the table setting (minimal), how food is ordered (digital, disposable menus), and how food arrives (minimal contact).

7 New Rituals & Positive Outlook

Different doesn't have to be negative. Seek opportunities to create new, lasting rituals, to signal safety, to claim new spaces, and to innovate.

8 Transparency & Communication

Incomplete or incorrect information poses a risk in this complex, unprecedented situation. Clear, concise, complete, consistent communication to employees and customers is critical, and will help boost efficiency, morale, and consumer sentiment.

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Supplemental Principles

For Senior Living



Facility-Wide

1 Keep Families Well-informed

Families are eager for facilities to re-open but want to be kept abreast of procedures and safety measures. Ensure proper and timely communication to families in advance of rolling out new changes. Emphasize measures to allow socializing while maintaining safety.

2 Establish Confidence in New Routines

Communicate changes to residents in a simple, straightforward manner. Avoid making many drastic changes at once. Ease them into new routines so they understand new procedures fully, and transition safely.

3 Sustainability

Disposables may be preferable for the time being, but long-term environmental and financial sustainability should be taken into consideration. Sustainability should go hand-in-hand with food safety. Make the choice that's right for your organization as well as your guests' safety, and communicate those decisions, clearly.



Dining Room

1 Safe Socialization

Organize dining room procedures to keep resident exposure as low as possible while allowing appropriate socialization. Creating shifts, establishing set groups of friends to consistently dine together, and controlling entry and exit can help minimize unnecessary contact.

2 Same Level of Assistance, Less Contact

Redesign the ordering, serving, and clearing process to reduce contact with servers. Implement ways for residents to preview the menu before entering or pre-order so time isn't spent perusing the menu while seated. If residents need help cutting food, make sure to do that in the kitchen before serving. Consider waiting to clear when everyone has left the table.



In-room Dining

1 Maintain Privacy

Tailor in-room service to match the usual practices of the facility. For independent communities, be mindful of how often staff are entering the room for non-essential reasons. Constant entry into resident homes to take orders, deliver food, and clean up can feel invasive.

2 Quality of Food Impacts Quality of Life

Because food services in resident communities is often the only option for residents, maintaining quality of food, quality of service, and culinary variety is important for quality of life. Variety is especially important when mealtime in quarantine is one of the few things to look forward to. Nutritional value is critical when exercise is limited.

How to read this document

While every dining establishment is different, most experiences share very similar experiential zones. We've organized the majority of this reopening guidance by zone, so it's easy to understand how it might map to your particular location.

More general guidance that is not applicable to a specific zone can be found under *Additional Considerations*.

Zonal Guidance	Pre-Arrival / Arrival	Earliest possible opportunity to help diners understand what to expect and how to approach your establishment with social distancing in mind.
	Entry / Exit	Important moment to clarify expectations, communicate conditions of entry, and begin actively managing social distancing requirements.
	Dining Experience	Where diners and staff engage most deeply, where the most significant changes will be experienced, and where the most important expression of your commitment to safety occurs.
	Restroom	This critical touchpoint that will either build or immediately compromise trust, depending on how thoughtfully it is approached.
General Guidance	Additional Considerations	Important general considerations that do not map to a specific zone.

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Senior Living Facility

Dining Rooms

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Pre-Arrival/Arrival

- Ensure families and residents receive clear communication on sanitation protocols, social distancing, commitment to food safety, and new operating guidelines as changes are made. Provide FAQs and a mechanism to seek additional information.
- When communicating with families and residents, make sure to acknowledge the difficulties of social isolation and emphasize any plans to re-introduce social dining.
- Clearly communicate that residents still have the option of receiving in-room dining
- Consider introducing dining room shifts that limit the number of diners at a time. Create table grouping with 3-4 friends and keep this grouping consistent for each meal.
- Make menu available to residents before entry. Consider taking orders before entering the dining room to minimize contact with servers.
- Set up a communication system to notify residents when they can and cannot leave their rooms to go to the dining hall for their meal. They may be used to flexible, 2-hour meal windows which may need to be modified to accommodate new procedures, and may have to adjust to tighter schedules.
- Make hand sanitizer highly visible and readily available throughout the building, to promote use and habituate users to its presence.
- Promote wearing of face masks as a social norm while traveling to the dining room.
- Carefully communicate and introduce new patterns and policies to residents as change can be hard for the elderly.
- Clearly post the current and next dining shifts outside of the dining room to ensure residents arrive for their appropriate shift.
- Well in advance of entry, post signage that includes requirements of entry, including occupancy limits, PPE, and social distancing rules, visibly.
- Ensure room delivery options are well communicated as alternatives with highly visible signage outside of the dining area.



Senior Living Facility

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Entry/Exit

- Consider a dedicated entry and exit to completely segment arriving and departing diners.
- Create a waiting area where residents can stand 6 feet apart while waiting to enter. Consider floor markers or chairs spaced 6 feet apart.
- Station staff at the entry to check temperatures or ensure residents are complying with policy, provide hand sanitizer, and ensure residents are at their designated meal shift.
- Position staff at the entry to guide guests to their designated table (using table numbers or other visual cues) to minimize wandering.
- Provide single seating options for residents who wish to maintain social distancing.
- When possible, install foot handles or alternative openers. Position wipes, touchless sanitizer dispensers, and trash cans before and after doors that must be touched.
- Message “your safety is our priority,” and ensure anyone feeling ill understands they may not enter and should request medical attention.



Senior Living Facility

Dining Rooms

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Dining Room

- **Tables should be spaced to provide ample circulation space for diners and cleaning crews. Designate “staff-only” zones and pathways as appropriate.**
- **Leverage outdoor or auxiliary area seating (common areas, interior gathering spaces, etc.) to manage capacity challenges. Ensure social distancing and sanitation procedures are in place. Provide signage, floor graphics, etc., when appropriate.**
- **Provide overt signal of cleanliness within the dining room. Consider signs indicating freshly sanitized tables that describe commitment to diners, and outline cleaning protocols.**
- **All communal items except touchless self-serve napkin or hand sanitizer dispensers should be removed from tables.**
- **Menus should be single use or posted visibly and boldly on the wall for everyone to see from their seats.**
- **Servers should wear clear face masks or shields so that the hard of hearing can read lips.**
- **Servers should retain social distancing as much as possible when taking orders, and serving, and should pick up food outside of the kitchen without entering.**
- **Cover food until placed on the table, and if able, let the diner remove the cover.**
- **Eliminate all buffet lines or self-serve items**
- **For residents who need assistance cutting their food, make sure to note that preference and pre-cut the food in the kitchen rather than having the server or aid assist at the table.**



Senior Living Facility

Dining Rooms

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Dining Room, *continued*

- **Avoid walking around with food trays to choose items.** For the memory impaired, consider offering pictures to select from rather than the food item itself.
- Servers should clear plates only after everyone has left the table to avoid leaning over residents.
- Dedicated masked/gloved sanitation crew should be easily distinguished from other staff, and perform highly visible cleaning. Consider assigning sections to sanitation crew to promote accountability and avoid cross contamination.
- Stagger exit by tables or dismiss residents individually to avoid traffic at the exit. Fully sanitize tables or replace table cloths between shifts.



Senior Living Facility

Dining Rooms

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Convenience/Sundries

- Consider “always open” or pop-up micro-markets or touchless vending machines with a variety of take-away items and staples to help mitigate dining room capacity challenges and enable staff to grab groceries on their way home from late shifts.
- Consider pre-packaged meals from third-parties to reduce effort of pre-packaging in-house.
- Provide wrapped, disposable cutlery, and consider reheat locations with safely spaced microwaves, sanitation wipes, hand sanitizer, etc.
- Rigorously limit access and capacity to maintain social distancing at all times. Leverage floor graphics and wayfinding signage reinforcing 1-way traffic flow and 6’ distances.
- Shoppers will occasionally forget something and need to “loop” back. Provide “off-ramps” that allow them to safely return to an earlier aisle, decreasing frustration & saving trip time.
- Place automatic hand sanitizer dispensers throughout the space, and sanitary wipe dispensers and trash cans near common items, such as chill cases with handles.
- Route traffic so that “last aisle” also serves as payment queue while waiting to check out.
- Leverage technology to provide contactless payment. Ensure social distancing is enforced at point of sale, and barriers are provided to minimize contact between diners and cashiers.
- Consider bundled food kits containing breakfast, lunch, and dinner options to minimize repeat visits to dining facilities.



Senior Living Facility

Dining Rooms

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Restrooms

- To comfortably allow good social distancing, consider “wait here” signs to avoid crowding while waiting for the restroom. Provide signs with visual guidance on how diners should pass each other if space is very constrained.
- Provide paper towel dispensers outside restrooms for those who refuse to touch doors, and position trash cans within easy arm’s reach of doors, inside and out.
- Post a well-kept cleaning log in an easily visible spot. Restrooms should smell fresh and clean at all times to ensure maximum confidence.
- Visits to the restroom should be as contact-free as possible for your diners. Door kicks, foot handles, touchless faucets and soap dispensers, easy access trashcans, and disposable paper towels instill confidence.



Senior Living Facility

Additional Considerations

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Family Engagement

- Provide frequent updates to family through well-maintained communication channels.
- Consider outdoor dining setups where family members can come for a meal as permitted locally.
- Ensure guests arrive at the building having been informed of policies and expectations ahead of time so they know what to expect.
- Place entry signs where guests pause upon arrival, to ensure maximum comprehension. Graphically and with as few words as possible, explain the expectations of their visit.
- Provide free face masks upon entry for any guest that may require them. Consider providing clear face masks or shields so that the hard of hearing can read lips.



Senior Living Facility

Additional Considerations

The residential nature of a senior living facility environment may require additional intervention. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Staff and Operations

- Ensure employees understand new requirements and guidelines prior to coming to work.
- Staff need to be prepared to provide necessary information and answer any resident or family inquiries at any given moment. Familiarize staff at all levels with federal and local government guidelines, facility guidelines, and change of procedures by providing extensive training to staff.
- Provide appropriate personal PPE to staff. Consider providing clear face masks or shields so that the hard of hearing can read lips.
- Clearly post all workplace requirements, including PPE, temperature-taking measures, associated sick leave policy, and available resources (CDC, FDA, etc.) so they are readily accessible.
- Frequently engage employees in open dialog to best understand concerns and process improvement opportunities. Provide mechanism to receive anonymous feedback.
- Factor additional time into shifts, allowing staff to appropriately prepare, given additional health and safety requirements.
- Provide separate entry/exit for staff, to avoid congestion and cross-contamination.
- Facilitate better cross-department communication and collaboration by equipping staff with telecommunication technology.
- Build trust over time and reopen your facilities, incrementally. Communicate plans in advance.
- Establish protocols for receipt of third-party deliveries, to minimize external access.
- Consider switching to PC beverages and condiments rather than pouring from pitchers or sharing communal condiments.



Senior Living Facility

In-room Dining

Senior living residents will likely rely more on in-room dining with COVID-19 present. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Room Entry/Exit

- Consider contactless technology for room access.
- Consider installation of touchless sanitizers in corridors, elevators, and rooms.
- Minimize staff entering the room when possible and move ordering to over the phone to reduce the number of times staff enters the room.
- Cover and protect food between kitchen and room. Drape trays to ensure plates do not come into direct contact with communal delivery cart surfaces.
- Designate sanitized routes and responsible staff to deliver meals from kitchen to guest areas, with automatic hand sanitizer before and after doors/surfaces that must be touched.
- Designate separate routes and responsible staff for returning dishes, to avoid cross-contamination.
- Communicate clear expectations regarding placing orders, receiving meals, any interaction with staff, and disposal of their dishes.



Senior Living Facility

In-room Dining

Senior living residents will likely rely more on in-room dining with COVID-19 present. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

In-room Dining

- As possible, strive to avoid any contact between residents and staff.
- Present residents with service options when taking orders. Explain clearly and transparently on any extra precautions being taken for different levels of engagement.
- As possible, strive to avoid any contact between residents and staff. Consider reserving a sanitized passage specifically for the purpose of in-room food delivery. Once food is delivered, staff uses a separate route to avoid cross contamination.
- Consider having dedicated staff for food wrapping and placement, delivery, and trash/tray/flatware collection.
- Ensure all food and beverages are covered and/or sealed upon delivery. Provide all necessary cutlery.
- Provide condiments in individual portions, along with sanitary wipes and extra disposable napkins.
- Delivery staff should wear all required PPE and practice sanitation procedures when delivering the food. Avoid any direct contact with food placed on cart at any given moment.
- Announce arrival of food and inquire about residents' preference for service at the point of delivery. Inform residents on after-meal trash/tray/flatware collection process.
- Consider packaging that minimizes separate parts and reduces the amount of trash so the mess is easier to contain in the room.
- Provide appropriate garbage disposal mechanisms for residents to self-clean disposable items if able.
- Allow residents to signal finishing of meal through phone calls while actively reaching out after 20-30 minutes of food delivery to ensure a prompt and timely collection of trash/tray/dirty dishes.



Senior Living Facility

In-room Dining

Senior living residents will likely rely more on in-room dining with COVID-19 present. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

In-room Dining, *continued*

- Consider offering grocery support for residents who would prefer to cook in their homes.
- Consider getting pre-packaged meals from suppliers to reduce food handling in-house.
- Consider bundled food kits containing breakfast, lunch, and dinner options to minimize repeat visits to resident rooms.
- Create designated spaces for food drop off and pick-up. Consider placing tables outside of rooms so residents can easily take their food and replace empty dishes without bending down.
- Closely monitor any trash, trays, dirty dishes left in the hallways by leveraging existing closed-circuit television and service staff. Enable necessary cross-department collaboration between security, housekeeping, and dining services for a better result.



Senior Living Facility

In-room Dining

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Family Engagement

- Provide frequent updates to family through well-maintained communication channels.
- If allowing visitors in rooms, ensure guests arrive at the building having been informed of policies and expectations ahead of time so they know what to expect.
- Establish protocols for accepting food items delivered by family members. Sanitize deliveries before delivering to residents. Request that visitors notify you before they deliver food.
- Consider outdoor dining setups where family members can come for a meal.
- Ensure guests arrive at the building having been informed of policies and expectations ahead of time so they know what to expect.
- Place entry signs where guests pause upon arrival, to ensure maximum comprehension. Graphically and with as few words as possible, explain the expectations of their visit.
- Provide free face masks upon entry for any guest that may require them. Consider providing clear face masks or shields so that the hard of hearing can read lips.



Senior Living Facility

In-room Dining

Senior living residents will likely rely more on in-room dining with COVID-19 present. Please consider the following as you craft your specific reopening plans:

Staff and Operations

- Ensure employees understand new requirements and guidelines prior to coming to work.
- Staff need to be prepared to provide necessary information and answer any resident or family inquiries at any given moment. Familiarize staff at all levels with federal and local government guidelines, facility guidelines, and change of procedures by providing extensive training to staff.
- Provide appropriate personal PPE to staff. Servers should wear compliant, clear shields so that the hard of hearing can read lips.
- Clearly post all workplace requirements, including PPE, temperature-taking measures, associated sick leave policy, and available resources (CDC, FDA, etc.) so they are readily accessible.
- Frequently engage employees in open dialog to best understand concerns and process improvement opportunities. Provide mechanism to receive anonymous feedback.
- Factor additional time into shifts, allowing staff to appropriately prepare, given additional health and safety requirements.
- Provide separate entry/exit for staff, to avoid congestion and cross-contamination.
- Facilitate better cross-department communication and collaboration by equipping staff with telecommunication technology.
- Consider augmenting usual room cleaning procedures since residents are eating in their rooms more frequently.
- Coordinate cross-department collaboration through adoption of facility-wide communication and digital technology.
- Establish proper process at each point of handoff. Document staff involved for each delivery for contact tracing purpose.

APPENDIX

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Resources & references

A brief synopsis of useful information sources*



White House & CDC

- Phased Guidelines
 1. Drive-through, curbside take out, or delivery
 2. Limited dine-in capacity
 3. Increased dine-in capacity
- High Level and relevant to all industries
- Specific Guidelines for Certain Industries
- e.g. Grocery & Food Retail
- Assume Restaurants & Bars is coming



FDA

- Best Practices for Reopening
- Today, only covers Phase 1: Pick-up and Delivery; no guidance on Dine-in
- Defers to CDC where FDA & CDC may differ



Your State

- Laws & Regulations, specific to your state & state's timeline
- Also: Guidance; language may say "consider"
- Will cover Phase 2 reopening specifics (limited dine-in capacity)
- Will differ by state
- e.g. Mask-wearing laws
- e.g. Employee temperature-taking



National Restaurant Association

- Best Practices nationwide; template document to be modified per-state
- Links to CDC, FDA, State information (clearinghouse)
- Peer information sharing & guidance including implicit standards & lessons learned

*Reflects guidance from sources published prior to May 5, 2020. Current guidance may vary.



Disclaimer

COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving situation. These materials do not constitute legal, medical or safety advice. Give careful consideration to local laws and guidance in your area, including the most recent advice from local and national health authorities, before making decisions for your business.