



Best Practice Guidance for Restaurant and Lodging Operators as Indiana Begins To Reopen from State of Indiana's COVID-19 Stay-at-Home Orders

Indiana's restaurant and lodging businesses have been and will continue to be fully committed to customer safety, employee safety, and food safety. As Indiana begins to emerge from the COVID-19 public health crisis and reopen more fully from the Stay-at-Home Orders, Indiana's Hospitality partners remain committed to sustaining their leadership role in keeping their employees and guests safe.

Given the extreme self-isolation process Hoosiers have endured recently, they will have a **heightened awareness of safety and social distancing** protocol for quite some time following this crisis.

Due to this heightened awareness, it is critical to every restaurant and lodging property's success that every employee follow all health and safety best practices, and that you **make it overly apparent** to your guests what measures your organization and team are taking to ensure the safety of your guests and the general public. This includes, but is not limited to, posting your health and safety measures so that they are fully on display in your facility and throughout your online presence.

We have also provided and will continue to provide updated plans from the **National Restaurant Association**, plans forthcoming from the **American Hotel & Lodging Association** as well as those prepared from **leaders in the science, medical, academia, and industry communities**. All of this information should be consulted and referenced as they are updated frequently. You must consider all aspects and **incorporate the best practices to ensure all current government guidelines are met and exceeded** for the safety of both staff and guests. While the hospitality industry is very diverse, and all establishments are unique we encourage all to continue to exceed your guest expectations and deliver on the **Hoosier Hospitality Promise**. Please continue to visit www.inrla.org for the most up to date information.

Following are steps the Indiana Restaurant & Lodging Association suggests restaurants and lodging businesses implement to fully demonstrate your commitment to health and safety as we emerge from the stay at home order, with the need to continue social distancing measures for some period of time:



- If your facility has been closed and you are **planning to reopen** at this time, prior to reopening and restocking your facility, while Indiana does not require an inspection for a restaurant or foodservice facility to reopen after a closure under this circumstance, **communication** with your local health department is highly encouraged, as is **formulating a plan** to ensure the safety of your facility, guest rooms, and the food you serve, including **updated training** for employees who have been out of work or for new hires. Best practice guidance includes following your health department’s **checklist** for opening a new facility such as a final inspection checklist. Examples of some resources include:
 - [Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements](#)
 - [Public Health Reasons for the Retail Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements](#)
 - [Sanitation of Bed and Breakfast Establishments](#)
 - [ServSafe for latest training and compliance guidance](#)
 - [CDC Handwashing](#)
- Continue to not only follow the **already high food safety standards** required to operate a food service business in Indiana, but also pursue additional ServSafe® training **courses**. These courses are always available online, providing guidance for foodservice team members to make sure they fully understand required **safety and hygiene practices**. While not all courses are required by the State of Indiana, you may want to require each staff member attend at least minimum training as a way to show your commitment to the highest standards of food safety.
- **Post** in a publicly prominent place in your facility and on your website your commitment to:
 - Guest safety and staff safety training – and the steps you are taking to go above and beyond in providing both a safe and lodging and/or dining experience.
- Create, execute and post publicly a full scale **“Hoosier Hospitality Promise”** cleaning and sanitizing protocol in preparation for welcoming guests. (Look for more information on the “Hoosier Hospitality Promise” to be forthcoming).
- Create a **plan and checklist** of all surfaces your staff and guests will come in contact with.
 - **Train your staff** on these surfaces and prepare procedures for elevated cleaning and sanitizing of these surfaces
 - **Post publicly** in your facility and online an elevated cleaning and sanitizing schedule for all surfaces that your staff and your guests will come in contact with.



- Continue to **monitor your employees' health**, including a screening at the start of their shift that where possible includes a temperature screening, quickly excusing from work any employee who exhibits symptoms. Actively encourage sick employees to stay home until they are free of fever (without the use of medication) for at least 72 hours (three full days) AND symptoms have improved for at least 72 hours AND at least seven days have passed since symptoms first began.
- Have **hand sanitizer** and sanitizing products readily available for employees and guests.
- Each business should determine, post and enforce a **maximum number of guests** allowed in a location at one time - based on factors such as square footage and layout of meeting room, ballroom, dine-in area and what the current social distancing rules are. This determination should also be used for dine-out or patio seating or open-air reception areas. This number can be modified as the Governor's gathering number and other social distancing rules change over time.
 - **Post this conspicuously** on your website and at your entrance so your guests know what to expect. Train your staff well on the best way to **communicate this to your guests**, especially those who may be disappointed when your determined capacity is reached.
- Arrange your **seating to allow appropriate social distancing between tables/groups**. We assume this is a six-foot distance at the beginning, that can be modified as the Governor's gathering number and other social distancing rules change over time.
 - We suggest where possible removing tables to make your dining area as clear as possible for social distancing appropriate movement. We also suggest when setting up a room to place all tables in distances that allow proper social distancing. Where that is not possible (furniture/booths are not movable), **clearly mark** which tables are not available for seating. Update your seating plans for meeting rooms. Communicate this clearly to staff and guests.
- Designate with **signage**, tape, or by other means appropriate social distancing spacing for employees and customers. This should include to the highest degree possible waiting areas, kitchen, back on the house, laundry, prep areas, etc.



- Having this signage be as **clear and attractive** as possible will assure your guests of your commitment to safety and to high standards.
- We suggest **updating your website and/or social media** presence letting your guests know what you're doing and that it is for their safety and your staff's safety.
- If you are likely to have guests **waiting** to enter your establishment, designate social distancing appropriate spacing outside.
 - Make your guests as comfortable with the new norms of waiting as possible. Having a **text system** to alert guests of available seating is more important now than ever.
- Continue to follow best social distancing and minimal contact procedures for **carry out and delivery of food**.
 - Have a plan in place to continue to have a strong carry out and delivery business, even while ramping up your facility's dine in process and business.
- Single use items should be utilized as much as possible. This includes but is not limited to salt and pepper, and other condiments. This includes one-time use disposable cups and amenities in guest rooms at a lodging property.
- No self-service by guests at buffets or salad bars.
- Where possible, change all buffet service and salad bars to cafeteria style where a staff member serves a guest.
- No utilization of communal silverware containers or allowing guests to utilize any serving utensil that may be utilized by staff or another guest.
- Individually packaged items for receptions or meeting breaks while hosting a group meeting.
- No guest will self-serve or utilize communal breakfast or coffee bars. Staff will assist all guests.
- Deliver all room service meals or items to the guest's door only and do not enter at this time.
- All linens and towels should be removed from each guest room and laundered.



- Remove as much collateral from a guest room as possible. If certain property information is needed to be communicated to a guest, consider the use of technology or one time use printed materials.
- Make sure your **online presence** is robust and acknowledges fully all you are doing to operate safely. - Keep regular operating hours and post them, make it clear when your facility is open for dine in.
- Allow your employees to wear **face coverings**.
- Allow customers to wear **personal protective equipment** such as face coverings within your facility, making them feel welcome and as safe as possible.
- Create an operating plan for any instance of an employee with a suspected or confirmed **case of COVID19**.
- Some customers will be eager to venture out to the greatest degree allowed, while others will remain nervous. **Acknowledging and accommodating both groups** is important at this time.
- **Communicate, Train, Communicate** – then do it all over again.
 - The way you **welcome your staff back** and meet them where they are in relation to **potential anxiety** over the current societal circumstances or any other issues, they are having will go a long way toward ensuring your long-term success.
 - The same is true of your customers.
 - Training your staff how to communicate with your guests completes this circle.