

Adapting to COVID-19

A Quick Reference for Restaurants and Food Service Environments

About This Resource

The following resources have been compiled to support MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) communities' restaurants and food service operations as they adapt and react to the impacts of the novel Coronavirus ("COVID-19"). The information provided herein does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. Instead, all information, content, and materials made available are for general informational purposes only. This resource contains links to third-party websites, which are provided solely for the convenience of the user and do not represent an endorsement of the contents of the third-party sites. As this is an evolving situation, resources and guidance are changing frequently. Please check local and state government sources for the most up-to-date health and safety information.

Background

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, on March 15, Gov. Charlie Baker issued an order limiting public gatherings and restaurant operations in the state, effective March 17, 2020 through April 5, 2020. The original order reads as follows:

"Any restaurant, bar, or establishment that offers food or drink shall not permit on premises consumption of food or drink; provided that such establishments may continue to offer food for take-out and by delivery provided that they follow the social distancing protocols set forth in Department of Public Health guidance."

On March 31, 2020, Massachusetts Governor Charles D. Baker issued COVID-19 order No. 21 (the "March 31 Order") extending his original March 23, 2020 emergency executive order requiring all businesses and organizations in Massachusetts that do not provide "COVID-19 Essential Services" to close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers, and the public until May 4, 2020.

On April 28, the Governor extended these orders through May 18, 2020.

On May 18, Governor Baker introduced the [Reopening Massachusetts](#) report, outlining a framework for resuming business activity in a four phased approach. Businesses previously declared essential are permitted to stay open. They must abide by the state's [Mandatory Safety Standards](#) and make a plan to do so using [this template](#). They also need to hang posters with guidance for [employers](#) and [workers](#), as well as a [compliance poster](#). This must be completed by May 25, 2020.

Dining in restaurants is not allowed at this time. The Governor will announce additional guidance on this before the second phase of reopening, expected in early June.

Keeping Your Business Open Checklist



Healthy Employees

- Train and remind food service staff every shift about new COVID-19 protocols.
- Staff should clean their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- No one should touch their face, especially their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Employees need to self-screen for fever, cough, shortness of breath, and [other symptoms](#) before reporting to work.
- If showing symptoms, employees should not report to work but notify their supervisor and contact a health professional.
- Staff should continue standard food service and food safety protocols and wear approved gloves and face coverings, following state and local ordinances.

Healthy Workplace

- Create a workplace safety plan using [this template](#) by May 25.
- Print and post your [plan compliance document](#) and [employer](#) and [worker](#) safety protocols by May 25.
- Keep a physical distance of at least six feet or two meters between staff and customers at all times.
- Use signage or other visual cues to remind customers and staff of this distance.
- Limit number of customers in store and keep pick-up curbside.
- Stagger work schedules so fewer employees are on site.
- Establish [contact-less pay](#) and promote tap and pay.
- If you have food employees at higher risk for COVID-19 because of age, underlying health conditions, or weakened immune systems, you may re-assign them to non-public-contact duties.
- Sanitize commonly touched surfaces such as keypads, counter tops, sneeze guards, and faucet handles several times daily.
- Ensure dishwasher and/or three-compartment sinks are used properly and have the appropriate level of sanitizer for final rinse (50-100 PPM chlorine-based sanitizer, follow product label for other approved sanitizers).
- Change chlorine-based sanitizing solution every four hours.
- Increase ventilation when possible by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning.

Adapting Your Business Checklist



Transitioning To Delivery & Pickup Only

- Select** an online delivery platform if your business does not yet have one.
Options include:
 - [Grubhub](#) (Zero commission fees and community relief fund).
 - [DoorDash](#) (Free delivery, zero commission fees for 30 days, and marketing support).
 - [UberEats](#) (Free delivery, waived signup fees with fast tracked onboarding for restaurants new to the app).
 - [PostMates](#) (Zero commission fees).
- Set up** a takeout/delivery portion of your website.
 - Fisherman is a Boston-based technology company that builds restaurant websites and is offering [free website services and assistance](#) in setting up takeout/delivery for any restaurant for the next 6 months.
- Include** a link on your website to your online ordering and pick-up or delivery options.
- Add** your business to the Massachusetts Restaurant Association online listing of establishments offering carry out food: [carryoutma.com](#).
- Add** your business to any local or regional lists for open businesses.
- Update** customer-facing platforms (e.g. website, social media accounts, online ordering platforms, and review sites like Yelp) with:
 - Business status (open for curbside pick-up or closed).
 - Current menu.
 - Changes to days/hours of operation.
 - Customer instructions for ordering/pick-up.
- Update** phone message if leaving information about changed hours or service.
- Message** customers over email over social media with updates about what actions you're taking to adjust to COVID-19.

Stabilizing Your Business Checklist



Operations & Finances

- Talk** with suppliers about necessary adjustments to frequency of orders and deliveries.
- Implement** new delivery protocols for receiving and disinfecting product.
- Talk** with your landlord about possible rent relief. Tips for talking with your property manager and negotiating rent are [here](#) from Graffito SP.
- Encourage** purchase of gift cards and gift certificates now.
- Set-up** "virtual tip jar" for business and/or workers using Venmo, Gofundme.org, etc.
- Include** link to your "virtual tip jar" with all customer facing communications.
- Consider** establishing a [Dining Bond Initiative](#), which allows customers to purchase a discounted "bond" to be redeemed for face value later.

Business Assistance

- Research** eligibility, requirements, and application deadlines for federal, state, local and industry assistance programs. See Financial Resource Guide.
- Maintain** records of business expenses by week and month to support business assistance applications and track the impacts of COVID-19 on your business (e.g. payroll costs, mortgage or rent payments, insurance, revenue loss).
- Apply** for eligible assistance.
- Consult** with organizations serving small business networks in your area (e.g. [SBA offices](#), chamber of commerce, economic development corporation).
- Track** assistance applications and correspondence.

Federal Assistance Programs

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA is offering multiple funding options for those impacted by Coronavirus (COVID-19).

www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options

SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program

This loan advance will provide up to \$10,000 of economic relief to businesses that are currently experiencing temporary difficulties.

- Download, complete, and submit the SBA EIDL Worksheet & Instructions to start.
- Send completed forms to Disaster.Recovery@mass.gov or fax to (508) 820-1401. For questions, please contact Disaster.Recovery@mass.gov
- Up to 21 days to process, 5 days to transfer funds

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

This loan program provides loan forgiveness for retaining employees by temporarily expanding the traditional SBA 7(a) loan program. Search for eligible lenders in your area here.

SBA Express Bridge Loans

Enables small businesses who currently have a business relationship with an SBA Express Lender to access up to \$25,000 quickly.

SBA Debt Relief

The SBA is providing a financial reprieve to small businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local Assistance Programs

Eastern Bank

Eastern Bank customers can access two new loan funds: 1) The Consumer Impact Loan Fund (\$2 million) will provide loans of up to \$5,000 @ 0% with no payments for the first three months, fixed rate of 3.99% thereafter; and 2) The Small Business Impact Loan Fund (\$5 million) will provide loans of up to \$25,000 to existing small business customers in need of working capital. Interest only payments for the first six months, 3.99% thereafter.

www.easternbank.com

Boston Area COVID-19 Restaurant Emergency Fund

This emergency fund is established as an aid for workers in the hospitality industry, particularly the restaurant sector, in Boston, MA and surrounding communities who have seen a direct financial impact as a result of the current COVID-19 health crisis.

www.gofundme.com/f/boston-area-covid19-restaurant-emergency-fund

Restaurant Strong Fund

The Greg Hill Foundation has teamed up with Samuel Adams to support those from the Massachusetts restaurant industry who have been impacted by the COVID-19 closures. Our goal is to provide \$1,000 grants to as many qualifying grantees as possible, namely to full-time restaurant workers in Massachusetts who are dependent on wages plus tips to cover basic living expenses and

provide for their families.

www.thegreghillfoundation.org/donations/restaurantstrongfund/

Food Service Industry Assistance Programs

covidhelp@restaurantworkerscf.org

One Fair Wage

The OFW campaign, a nonprofit advocating against sub-minimum-wage laws for tipped restaurant workers, launched the OFW Emergency Fund. The target \$213,000 (based on the federal tipped minimum wage of \$2.13/hour) will provide immediate cash assistance to restaurant employees, delivery workers, and other tipped workers in the food industry. Workers who are already involved as members of One Fair Wage or sign up with One Fair Wage and participate in a confirmation interview with one of our organizers will be qualified to receive assistance.

ofwemergencyfund.org/help

Children of Restaurant Employees (CORE)

For food and beverage service employees with children, who are diagnosed with COVID-19 or under quarantine.

coregives.org

Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC)

Restaurant Opportunities Centers United is providing resources and financial assistance to restaurant workers impacted by the coronavirus crisis.

rocunited.org/relief/

Bartender's Emergency Assistance

Bartender or the spouse or child of a Bartender

www.usbgfoundation.org/beap

Other Assistance Programs

Modest Needs

Small, emergency grants to low-income workers who're at risk

www.modestneeds.org/for-applicants/

KIVA

Kiva is an online crowdfunding platform where borrowers can access 0% interest small business loans.

www.kiva.org/borrow

Facebook Small Business Grants Program

\$100M to be distributed in coming weeks. Sign up for updates.

www.facebook.com/business/grants

Intuit Small Business Relief Initiative

QuickBooks is committing up to \$1 million through a fund and employee-directed contributions while also seeking donations from other large partners. Create a free GoFundMe account to participate.

www.gofundme.com/f/smallbusinessrelieffund

General References

Federal Government Department of Labor

Frequently asked questions about how the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla/pandemic

Federal Stimulus Bill

An article explaining what restaurants need to know about the \$2 trillion stimulus package.

ny.eater.com/2020/3/26/21193579/coronavirus-restaurants-stimulus-package-impact-new-york

Local Health Guidance

Most cities and towns are issuing industry specific guidelines on their websites. Be sure to check for any local ordinances and updates.

Employment

A list of national designated essential services that are hiring hosted by Spill the Dish.

spillthedish.com/covid_hiring.php

Food Business-specific COVID-19 and Crisis Management

- This [webinar](#) shared by the James Beard Association, which speaks to operations during a time of crisis.
- COVID-19 [learnings and resources](#) (specific to real estate/restaurant/retail), aggregated by Graffito
- [Chicken and Rice Guys wrote about their experience](#) and learnings from managing a crisis in 2017 when they had to close the restaurant for 8 days.
- [Live list of resources](#) and best practices from Commonwealth Kitchen on Running a Food Business During Covid-19.