



# COVID-19 Guidance for Food Facilities in Allegheny County

Updated 4/6/2021

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The following information is a summary of COVID-19 safety requirements and guidance under current Pennsylvania orders. Food facilities are expected to follow the latest orders and guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, Governor Wolf, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). More information is available on ACHD's Food Safety Program's website at [www.achd.net/food](http://www.achd.net/food), the November 23, 2020 [Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health for Mitigation and Enforcement](#) as amended [April 1, 2021](#), the associated [FAQ](#), and in this [guidance for the restaurant industry](#) from the governor's office.

## Seating and Capacity Limits



Facilities are required to calculate and post their maximum allowable occupancy at each entrance. Limits have been increased effective April 4, 2021:

### Indoors:

- **With self-certification:** 75% of fire code occupancy (including employees).
- **Without self-certification:** 50% of fire code occupancy (including employees).
- **To self-certify:** <https://www.pa.gov/covid/business-unites/certify-my-restaurant/>

### Outdoors:

- No outdoor capacity limitation exists for restaurants.
- Physical distancing requirements of six feet between tables/groups must be followed.

### Everywhere:

- Guests must be seated to be served.
- **Parties must be spaced 6 feet apart.**
- **Barriers may be used** instead of spacing at bars, counter seating, and fixed booths where parties are seated back to back. Barriers should measure 5 feet from the floor. Capacity limits still apply.

## Face Coverings (Masks or Shields)



**Must be worn by employees at all times and by customers except when seated at their own tables** unless they have a medical exemption or when a face covering would endanger their safety, in which case a food facility must provide an alternate method for the customer to purchase and receive their food. Discomfort is not a threat to health or safety. Refer to the state's [Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) and [FAQ](#) for more details.



## Hand Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer stations must be placed at high-contact locations.

## Beginning April 4, 2021, the following limits apply to gatherings:



- **Indoor events:** 25% of maximum occupancy
- **Outdoor events:** 50% of maximum occupancy or 33 people per 1,000 square feet (50% of 67 people per 1,000 square feet)

*Limits include staff in the event space. Events are included in a facility's capacity limitations (75% of fire code if [self-certified](#); 50% of fire code if not).*

- **When a venue has fixed seating, reserved seats must be designated** with groups limited to 10 people unless all in the group live in the same household.
- There must be at least 6 feet between seated groups.
- **Attendees must be required to follow 6-foot distancing & wear masks or face coverings.**
- **Venues must implement best practices** such as timed entry, multiple entry & exit points, multiple restrooms, and hygiene stations. Refer to the [CDC Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool](#) for additional information regarding best practices.
- **Discrete gatherings must be held in separate spaces** from each other and from restaurant dining. Refer to the state's [Targeted Mitigation FAQ](#) for details.
- **Event hosts must maintain a list of all guests in attendance** including phone number and expected location 14 days after the event.

*Gatherings and events happen over a limited and defined timeframe and include: fairs, festivals, concerts, or shows and groupings that occur within larger, more permanent businesses, such as shows or performances within amusement parks, individual showings of movies on a single screen/auditorium within a multiplex, business meetings or conferences, or each party or reception within a multi-room venue.*

## COVID-19 Compliance Recommendation

Designate a COVID-19 Compliance Officer who is responsible for ensuring compliance with all COVID-19 related orders.



## Nightclubs

- Nightclubs are permitted to operate at 50% maximum occupancy.
- Physical distancing, face covering, and other mitigation measures are required for employees and guests.
- Bar service is only permitted for seated guests.



## Buffet and Self Service

- **Masks and physical distancing in lines are required.**
- **Recommendations:**
  - **Provide a server** at the buffet if possible.
  - **Monitor** the buffet to make sure customers are wearing masks and not re-using plates.
  - **Provide hand sanitizer** at each end of the buffet and by self-service drink stations.

## Health & Safety Requirements

- **Sick employees must stay home.** This is essential to stopping the spread of COVID-19.
- **Screen staff temperatures before each shift.**  Anyone with a fever of 100.4°F or higher must be sent home.
- **When a staff member tests positive for COVID-19:**
  - Identify close contacts among staff.
  - Notify them of exposure and exclude them from working in-person.
  - Close contacts must quarantine according to ACHD requirements.
  - Provide names and contact information for close contacts to the Health Department.
- **Maintain distance between employees.**
  - Stagger shift and break times
  - Limit access to break and locker rooms.
  - Arrange seating to ensure distancing.
  - Organize operations to maximize distance between employees on duty.
- **Floor markers or signs are required** to ensure customers remain at least 6 feet apart in lines.
- **Employees must wash hands at least once per hour** or more frequently as needed.

## Sanitization and Disinfection Requirements

- **Train staff on proper procedures** to ensure that all areas are maintained.



### Clean & Sanitize food contact areas:

- **Use normal chemicals for sanitizing** at normal concentrations. Chemicals and concentrations used for disinfection may contaminate food.
- **Increase frequency** to ensure all food contact surfaces are sanitary.
- **Verify that dish machines (ware washers) are working properly.** Regular checks are required. Documenting these checks is encouraged.
- **Follow food safety practices at all times** to protect your staff and guests' health.

### Clean & Disinfect non food contact areas:

- **Tables and chairs must be disinfected between parties.** Tables and chairs should be smooth, easily cleanable, and nonabsorbent.
- **Disinfect high-touch areas**, including door handles, checkout lanes, ATMs, and other oft used items at least once per hour, or more frequently as needed.
- **Restrooms** should be cleaned and disinfected once per hour, or more frequently as needed.
- **Employee locker rooms and break rooms** must be cleaned and disinfected at minimum between shifts.

### General Sanitary Requirements:

- **Reusable menus must be disinfected** between uses.
- **Condiments may not be left on tables for use by multiple parties.** Provide by request only.
- **Refilling customers' containers** (such as mugs, growlers, or food boxes) is **permitted ONLY IF:**
  - Container can be refilled without contacting the tap or dispenser OR
  - Container is sanitized before refilling OR
  - Tap or dispenser is sanitized before and after each use.
- **Carts and handbaskets** made available to customers must be disinfected by facility staff between each use.
- **Hours of operation** should be adjusted as necessary to ensure there is sufficient time to clean and/or restock.

If you have questions about topics not covered here or need clarification about the current state orders, please visit ACHD's Food Safety Program's website at [www.achd.net/food](http://www.achd.net/food), email the food safety program at [foodsafety@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:foodsafety@alleghenycounty.us), or call our offices at (412) 578-8044.