

Forward Planning: A Re-Opening Checklist



Several major research and data mining firms released reports projecting a majority of consumers will be very slow to return to dining in. This information should be taken into consideration when reviewing all of the categories referenced below - from planning your reopening menu to evaluating the continuation of your To Go program.

Communication is critical: communicating with your employees, your distributor and ultimately your Guests. Take advantage of every opportunity to share what you are doing to keep everyone safe.

Menu

- Review your current menu (dine in and to go). Consider changes that would make it easier to execute.
- Work with your IFD Foodservice Consultant to ensure IFD has your required items.
- Discuss your “opening order” with your IFD Foodservice Consultant as soon as possible.

Dining Area Preparations

- Clean carpets, floors, windows, front and back of the house thoroughly. Let your Guests know you care by providing a clean and safe restaurant.
- Distance your tables for proper social distancing - follow the 6’ social distancing rule; no groups larger than 10.
- If space allows, consider adding outdoor seating in accordance with the social distancing rule.
- Consider removing self-serve areas like beverages, salad, and condiment bars.
- Place hand sanitizer stations or bottles strategically throughout the restaurant – entrance, self-service areas such as beverage or condiment stations; maybe even gloves for self-serve beverages.
- Consider a plastic shield at your cashier or in areas where the public is close to food.

Table Settings

- Consider removing condiments (salt, pepper, ketchup, etc.) from the tables and deliver them with the meal instead. Ask if any condiments are needed when taking the order. Clean condiments after each use or use single serve packets/cups or ramekins.
- Consider removing napkin dispensers from the table.
- Bring out silverware with the meal while wearing gloves or after the Guests are seated instead of on the table ahead of time. Consider wrapping or putting them into a sleeve for hygiene.
- Consider plate covers for meals coming out to the tables. Remove plate cover at the table to ensure temperature and hygiene.

High Touch Cleaning/Sanitizing

- Review all touch points to be targeted for more frequent (or after every use) sanitizing: credit card machine, menus, restrooms, etc.
- Menu options: paper/disposable only, a menu board, or encourage Guests to use their own mobile device for menu access.
- After bussing/cleaning/sanitizing tables and seats, consider placing a small sign signifying sanitation was completed.

Staff Training

- Communicate and provide staff training on new safety policies and procedures.
- Establish a sick employee policy. Make sure if an employee is sick, they stay home.*
- Ensure all staff wear gloves (and possibly masks) ensuring proper use. Suggest a specific color glove (blue or purple) so they are more readily seen by your Guests when sanitizing tables.*
- Ensure all staff are washing their hands frequently. Conduct a hand washing training; utilize a timer for washing hands properly.

Forward Planning: A Re-Opening Checklist

Staff Training (cont.)

- As space allows, stagger workstations so employees are not working side-by-side or facing each other.
- Set up sanitizer stations for your staff to keep separated from those serving.
- Train your host/hostess to open the door for your Guests.
- Instruct all waitstaff to frequently wipe/sanitize all door handles during open hours.

General Operations

- Consider a “reservation only” format to control group size and number of Guests dining in at a given time.
- Limit access to your kitchen to only approved staff and suppliers.
- Receiving deliveries: follow best practices for cleaning and sanitizing incoming cases including using gloves.

To Go

- Clearly mark To Go and Pick Up parking spaces and waiting area; consider marking six-foot spacing to maintain social distancing between parties.
- Consider teaming up with a delivery service (UberEats, EatStreet, DoorDash and GrubHub) if you haven’t already OR provide your own delivery service.
- Consider adding “family meal” specials to your offering.
- Consider “deconstructing” entrees or appetizers and let your Guests assemble them at home.
- Consider using tamper evident/tamper proof packaging on To Go orders, whether picked up or delivered.

Promotion

- Utilize social media and your website as much and as often as possible: re-open date announcement, specials, what actions you are taking to keep your restaurant safe, clean, and sanitized.
- Are there other media outlets that are assisting restaurant operators with free promotional advertising (websites, radio)?
- Consider using exterior signage announcing your re-opening.
- At least a week prior to your reopening, add a flyer in all of your To Go orders announcing the reopen date.
- Let your Guests know what you have done to welcome them back to dining in.
- Consider giving dine in Guests a take-away with hours or specials information.

*Resources

- FDA Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic <http://www.callifd.com/Files/Newsletters/05/66.PDF>
- National Restaurant Association – Reopening Guidance <http://www.callifd.com/Files/Newsletters/05/65.PDF>
- Food and Beverage Industry Positive Test Protocol <http://www.callifd.com/Files/Newsletters/05/64.PDF>
- IFD Disposables Items Guide <http://www.callifd.com/Files/Newsletters/05/67.PDF>
- SecureIt Flyer (Tamper Resistant Labels) <http://www.callifd.com/Files/Newsletters/06/62.PDF>