

Philadelphia Indoor Dining  
Effective: Sept. 8, 2020  
Frequently Asked Questions

**Health & Safety**

**Do I need to temperature check all of my employees?**

At this time, you do not need to temperature check your employees if you do not have a positive case. If you do have a positive case, you must follow directions CDC and PA Department of Health requirements—which does include a temperature check.

- <https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/business-guidance/#ForEmployers>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

**Do I need to screen employees for symptoms before each shift?**

Yes, you must screen employees before each shift. Businesses should have educational information and signage posted in common employee areas.

**Do I need to screen guests before they are seated?**

- At minimum, guests should be notified via signage that they should not frequent the establishment if they have symptoms. Best practice would be to ask guests at the point of reservation and when they arrive if they are experiencing any symptoms.

Symptoms include

- Fever. Anyone with a temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher should not be at work.
- Chills. Including repeated shaking with chills.
- Muscle pain or body aches.
- Headache or confusion.
- Difficulty staying awake or waking up.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. May have bluish lips or face.
- Congestion or runny nose.
- Sore throat.
- New loss of taste or smell.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Diarrhea.

**Masks/Face Shields**

**Does the mask and face shield requirement apply to all staff?**

No, only staff that is working indoors and has interaction with the customers must wear a mask and face shield (servers/bussers/hosts, etc.)

**Do chefs/cooks need to wear a mask and a face shield?**

No, chefs/cooks may choose to wear one or the other and must be appropriately socially distanced.

**Do servers that only work outdoors need to wear masks and a face shield?**

No, for employees that interact with customers outside—they only need one of the two.

**If a bartender is making drinks and not serving or interacting with customers, do they need a mask and face shield?**

No, if a bartender is not having any interaction with the customers—they only need one of the two.

**Can my employees wear goggles with a face mask instead of a full shield?**

This would be permissible as long as the Dept. of Health approves of the goggles being used.

**When do guests need to wear masks?**

Guests must wear a mask whenever they are not actively eating or drinking at their table. Guests must wear masks when waiting for the bathroom or waiting to be seated.

**Occupancy Questions**

**Does 25 percent indoor occupancy include front and back of the house staff?**

No, your 25 percent occupancy number only includes front of the house staff—staff that are interacting with the customers.

**Can I have a private event at 25 percent occupancy?**

No, state restrictions only allow a private event to be 25 people, including staff. It is not based on an occupancy percentage. Here is the definition of an event:

*An event or gathering is a temporary grouping of individuals who interact for defined purposes, that takes place over a limited timeframe, such as hours or days. For example, events and gatherings 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 venue.*

**How many people can I seat outdoors?**

Outdoor dining is capped at 50 people total. If you would like to request authorization to have up to 150 people, you can do so [HERE](#) (LINK TO EHS OUTDOOR DINING APPLICATION MORE THAN 50)

Outdoor private events are capped at 150 people in the City of Philadelphia.

**Spacing/Seating**

**If a family has more than 4 people in their party for indoor dining, may they sit together?**

No, no more than four people can sit at a table indoors.

**Do physical barriers need to be used if tables are 6' apart?**

No, physical barriers only need to be used if a restaurant is unable to ensure 6' of social distancing.

**How high do barriers need to be?**

Barriers should reach 6' in height.

**Do I need a barrier for my open kitchen if I ensure there is 6' of distance between the kitchen and guests?**

No, as long as 6' of social distancing is maintained, you do not need a barrier.

**Do I need a barrier at my register/host stand as long as I maintain 6' of distance?**

No, as long as 6' of social distancing is ensured, you do not need a barrier. If you are unable to ensure social distancing, you do need a barrier.

**Is bar seating permitted?**

No, no bar seating or bar service is permitted.

### **Closing Time**

**What time do I need to close for indoor seating?**

Last seating/call is at 11:00 pm and the establishment must be clear of all guests by midnight.

**What time do I need to close for outdoor seating?**

Last seating/call is at 11:00 pm and the establishment must be clear of all guests by midnight.

**What if I extended my premise for outdoor seating and my current closing time is 10:00 pm?**

Beginning on September 8, your last call will be at 11 pm and the establishment must be clear of all guests by midnight.

**What if I previously operated my establishment past an 11 pm last call and want to continue doing so?**

You may contact the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Environmental Health Services at 215-685-7495 to request a potential waiver to the 11 pm closing time.

### **Entertainment**

**May I have a dance floor/pool tables/etc. at my establishment?**

No, a guest must be seated at all times for a public or private event.

**May I have live music as long as guests stay in their seat?**

Yes, you are permitted to have live music as long as guests don't leave their seat.

### **Private Events**

**Do guests at a private event need to wear a mask at all times?**

Yes, unless a guest is seated at their table, they must wear a mask at all times.

**May I have a dancefloor at my private event?**

No, if food and beverage is being served dance floors or any entertainment that would encourage a guest to leave their seat is not permitted.

**May I have a cocktail hour?**

Guests must be seated at all times when consuming food and beverage. Therefore, a standing cocktail hour would not be permitted.

**Does the 4 people per table limit apply to private events?**

Yes, this applies to private indoor events.

**Miscellaneous:**

**Where can I find more information on ventilation and how to ensure my business is operating as safely as possible?**

Contact your HVAC company for guidance.

**When will additional changes be made to increase capacity?**

The City will revisit the current policy in October, per the Commissioner's Sept. 10 announcement.

**May I have a coat check?**

Yes, but barriers must be used since it is unlikely that social distancing could be ensured in that scenario.

**Resources:**

**Philadelphia:**

- <https://www.phila.gov/media/20200529130422/Guidelines-for-Restaurants-Mobile-Food-Vendors.pdf>
- <https://www.phila.gov/media/20200529130430/Guidelines-for-Hotels.pdf>
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**Pennsylvania:**

- <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Targeted-Mitigation-FAQ.aspx>
- <https://www.lcb.pa.gov/Legal/Documents/Green%20Yellow%20County%20Guidance%2007222020.pdf>

**Philadelphia Contact Information:**

- Philadelphia Department of Public Health and Environmental Health Services: 215-685-7495