



REOPENING GUIDANCE BARS OR SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS

Bars and similar establishments* must comply with occupancy limits as detailed by the governor's executive order. There is no occupancy limit outdoors at a bar or similar establishments, and it does not include employees.

- Do not offer valet services except for vehicles with placards or plates for disabled parking
- Keep any of the following interactive functions, exhibits or amusement venues closed: child play areas, interactive games, video arcades, amusement parks or water parks

Recommendations Before Reopening

- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation
- Conduct routine HVAC maintenance and change air filters
- Cleaning staff should [clean and disinfect](#) all areas including offices, bathrooms, and common areas, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces
 - Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water
 - Next, disinfect surfaces using [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2](#), the virus that causes COVID-19, and that are appropriate for the surface
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method, contact time, and required personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Operations can begin after completing the cleaning and disinfection procedures

Planning for Absenteeism

- Determine how you will operate with a reduced staff if employees cannot work due to illness, staying home to care for sick family members and those who must stay home to watch their children
- Prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies
- Cross-train employees to perform essential functions, so the workplace can operate even if key employees are absent

Free COVID-19 Testing is Available for Everyone

We encourage business owners and employees to get free testing at a testing site. The updated online self-assessment tool is confidential and designed to serve the public in the Greater Houston area. To register for testing, visit <http://covidcheck.hctx.net/>. For those who do not have access to the online tool, call **832-927-7575** to get scheduled for testing. Free testing is available regardless of citizenship status and for those who are uninsured.

Employees should **not** return to work if they are sick. If an employee has a sick family member they live with or has been near an ill person, they should notify their employer immediately.

Please go to www.hcphtx.org for any additional information on how to keep yourself or employees safe during this pandemic.

People at higher risk for severe illness are those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.

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Additional Information is Available

[FDA/NRA Guidance](#)

[The Governor's Report to Open Texas](#)

[CDC Business & Employer Resources](#)

**For these purposes, bars or similar establishments are establishments with a permit from Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) that are not otherwise considered restaurants.*

CHECKLIST FOR MINIMUM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the minimum recommended health protocols for all bars or similar establishments choosing to operate in Texas. Bars or similar establishments may adopt additional protocols consistent with their specific needs and circumstances to help protect the health and safety of all employees, contractors, and customers

Health Protocols for Your Facilities

- Consider having an employee or contractor manage and control access to the bar, including opening doors to prevent attendees from touching door handles
- Physically block off the bar and remove or block off bar stools so customers cannot sit or order at the bar
- Regularly and frequently clean and disinfect any regularly touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, tables, and chairs
- Regularly and frequently clean restrooms, and document the cleanings
- Disinfect any items that attendees have contact with
- Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available to employees, contractors, and attendees
- Place readily visible signage at the venue to remind everyone of best hygiene practices
- Clean and disinfect the area used for by customers (tables, chairs, etc.) after each group of attendees depart, including the disinfecting of tables, chairs, stalls, and countertops
- Clean and sanitize the bar daily
- For bars with more than 10 employees or contractors present at one time, consider having an individual exclusively or partially dedicated to ensuring the health protocols adopted by the facility are being successfully implemented and followed
- To ensure compliance with these protocols, TABC staff should monitor bars throughout the state of Texas. TABC has the authority to suspend any license that poses an immediate threat or danger to public safety. Failure to follow these protocols may result in a 30-day license suspension for the first infraction, and a 60-day suspension for a second infraction

Health Protocols for Serving Your Customers

- Customers should not be allowed to loiter at the bar or in commonly trafficked areas. Customer should remain seated at tables inside the bar
- Only provide service to individuals seated
- Parties should always maintain at least 6 ft distance apart from other parties, including while waiting to be seated in the establishment or for admission to the establishment
- Discourage activities that allow for close human contact including but not limited to dancing
- Keep clear and unobstructed pathways for customers entering and exiting
- Designate staff to ensure customers keep 6 ft of distance between parties if the customers are waiting to enter the establishment
- Have a hand sanitizing station available upon entry to the establishment
- No table of more than 6 people

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- Dining:
 - Do not leave condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional tabletop items on an unoccupied table
 - Provide condiments only upon request, and in single-use (non-reusable) portions
 - Use disposable menus (i.e., a new menu for each customer)
 - If serving a buffet is, bar employees should serve the food to customers
- Ensure social distancing by spacing different parties 6 ft apart from each other:
 - Tables or chairs must be installed to seat all customers to maintain social distancing, and may not be moved
 - Consider positioning an unoccupied table or another object adjacent to each occupied table, creating space to maintain a 6 ft distance between groups permanently
 - Take orders from customers seated at a table or by web/phone application
- Contactless payment is encouraged. When not available, minimize contact. Both parties should wash or sanitize hands after the payment process

Health Protocols for Employees or Contractors

- Train all employees and contractors on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette
- Screen employees and contractors before coming into the establishment:
- Send home any employee or contractor who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking with chills
 - Muscle pain
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Feeling feverish or measured temperature greater than $> 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$
 - Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19
- Do not allow employees or contractors with new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to work until:
 - If the employee or contractor is diagnosed with COVID-19, they may return to work when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (having no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications)
 - The individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
 - If the employee or contractor has COVID-19 symptoms and does not get tested or evaluated by a medical professional, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19. The individual may not return to work until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above
 - If the employee or contractor has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to work before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual to return to work based on an alternative diagnosis
- Do not allow an employee or contractor with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to work until the end of the 14 day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure (with an exception granted for healthcare workers and critical infrastructure workers)
- Have employees or contractors wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the establishment
- Have employees or contractors maintain at least 6 ft separation from other individuals. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as face-covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced
- If the establishment provides a meal for employees or contractors, it is recommended to have the meal individually packed for each individual
- Consider having all employees or contractors wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks

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