

OCEANIC GLOBAL COVID-19 REGULATIONS DATABASE

Countries around the world are approaching regulation for businesses reopening from the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. Here we compile some global examples of regulations supportive of reusables and an overview of what leading health institutions are recommending. This is by no means a comprehensive database, but rather a selection of policies relevant to foodservice reopening practices. Check your local city / state / regional guidance for more specific information to your community.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Globally, there is a focus on hygiene practices, including increased sanitation of high-touch areas, and a recommendation to avoid buffets or self-service.
- There is rarely strict guidance on using disposable dishware instead of reusables, and the [WHO Accommodation Sector](#) guidance makes no reference to disposable foodservice items.
 - If using reusable silverware and dishes, it is recommended that they are washed in the dishwasher. If not feasible, hand washing guidelines are in place to ensure sanitization.
 - However, it is suggested that condiments and similar shared items be single-use. If not feasible, shared items must be properly disinfected after every usage.
 - In many places, utensils are required to be rolled or packaged.
- Use of disposable or touchless menus is recommended or enforced, based on location.
- The [CDC](#) is the only major institution we came across that suggested using single-use foodservice items at any point. While the CDC recommends disposable foodservice items, **it does not require disposables** stating, "If disposable items are not feasible or **desirable**, ensure that used or dirty non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed, rinsed, and sanitized to meet food safety requirements."
- Countries including Singapore, Australia, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland, and Germany have reusable-friendly reopening guidance.

WHO

Guidance for Accommodation Sector

Guidance for Food Businesses

- PPE
 - Disposable gloves should not be used in the food work environment as a substitute for handwashing. Wearing disposable gloves can give a false sense of security and may result in staff not washing hands as frequently as required. Frequent handwashing is a greater protective barrier to infection than wearing disposable gloves.
 - As part of its advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19 (6), WHO advises that governments encourage the use of fabric masks for source control of COVID-19 by the general public in areas of widespread community transmission in settings where physical distancing of at least 1 metre cannot be achieved. Employees whose work involves close contact with others, such as in restaurants, breakfast and dining rooms and bars, should wear fabric masks according to local guidance.
- FOODSERVICE
 - In the context of COVID-19 buffets are not recommended and should not be offered.
 - If drink dispensing machines are used, there should be adequate hand hygiene facilities for customers, regular cleaning and sanitizing of any utensils used for the dispenser and routine cleaning and sanitizing of the dispenser itself.
- DISHWASHING
 - All dishes, silverware, and glassware should be washed and disinfected in a dishwashing machine, including items that have not been used, as they might have been in contact with the hands of guests or staff.
 - If for any reason manual washing is required, the usual steps should be followed (rinse, wash, disinfect), taking the maximum level of precautions. Drying should be carried out by way of air drying or using disposable paper towels. Tablecloths and napkins should be washed according to local public health regulations.
 - Linens should be machine washed in hot water (60–90°C) with laundry detergent. If machine washing is not possible, soak linens in a container with water (preferably hot) and soap or laundry detergent.
- WASTE MANAGEMENT
 - Cleaning staff should be trained to support the environmentally sound management of waste to prevent harm to the environment and detrimental effects to human health through polluted air, water, land and the food chain. Cleaning staff should be supported to follow specific national guidance for waste management in relation to COVID-19 and WHO guidance on waste management for the virus (SARS-CoV-2).

CDC

Considerations for Restaurants and Bars

- Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes, napkins, tablecloths). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that used or dirty non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed, rinsed, and sanitized to meet food safety requirements. Change and launder linen items (e.g., napkins and tablecloths) after each customer or party's use. Employees should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after handling used food service items.
- Avoid use of food and beverage utensils and containers brought in by customers.
- Avoid using or sharing items that are reusable, such as menus, condiments, and any other food containers. Instead, use disposable or digital menus, single serving condiments, and no-touch trash cans and doors.

FDA

Best Practices for Food Retail Stores, Restaurants

- Discontinue operations, such as salad bars, buffets, and beverage service stations that require customers to use common utensils or dispensers.
- Verify that your ware-washing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and with the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
- Remember that hot water can be used in place of chemicals to sanitize equipment and utensils in manual ware-washing machines.
- Warewasher should be clean and functioning and equipped with detergent and sanitizer (single temperature machine, 165°F) or reach 180°F rinse (high temperature).

NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

COVID-19 Reopening Guidance (Stay Up-to-Date)

- Focuses on cleaning & sanitation, employee PPE, monitoring of employee health, as well as social distancing protocols.
- Train all employees on the importance of frequent hand washing, the use of hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content, and give them clear instruction to avoid touching hands to face.
- No mention of recommending single-use items, and includes guidance to sanitize reusable menus.
- Highlights that food safety has always been a focus and priority in this industry!

US STATES

Tracker on U.S. state regulations and [HERE](#) (Source: Post-Landfill Action Network).

Arkansas

Updated: Sept. 9, 2020

- Self-service operations, including, but not limited to, salad bars, buffets, and condiment bars may operate within requirements.
- Following each meal service, the tables, chairs, menus and any other frequently contacted surfaces including, but not limited to, condiment containers, napkin holders and salt/pepper shakers shall be cleaned and disinfected prior to seating the next customer.
- Single-Use items including, but not limited to, disposable silverware, cups, lids, and straws shall be removed from public access and provided only upon request, unless the Single-Use items are adequately protected from contamination through the use of dispensing devices or packaging.

California

Updated: Nov. 24, 2020

- Discontinue pre-setting tables with napkins, cutlery, glassware, food ware, etc. These should be supplied individually to customers as needed. Do not leave card stands, flyers, napkin holders, or other items on tables.
- Suspend use of shared food items such as condiment bottles, salt and pepper shakers, etc. and provide these foods in single serve containers, if possible. Where this is not possible, shared items such as condiment bottles, shakers, etc., should be supplied as needed to customers and disinfected after each use. Discontinue self-service.
- Pre-roll utensils in napkins prior to use by customers. Employees must wash hands before pre-rolling utensils in napkins. The pre-roll should then be stored in a clean container. After customers are seated, the pre-roll should be put on the table by an employee who recently washed their hands.
- Reusable customer items including utensils, food ware, breadbaskets, etc., must be properly washed, rinsed, and sanitized. Cleaned flatware, stemware, dishware, etc., must be properly stored away from customers and personnel until ready for use. Use disposable items if proper cleaning of reusable items is infeasible.
- Takeout containers for leftovers must be filled by customers and available only upon request.

Policy: In [San Francisco](#), customers can now bring their own bags and stores must charge \$0.25 per bag which went into effect on July 1, 2020.

US STATES CONTINUED

Colorado

Updated: Nov. 30, 2020

- Use, as much as practicable, disposable single-use menus, menu boards, or create online menus for guests to review from their electronic device.
- Provide single-use or single-serving condiments.

Connecticut

A statement from **April, 2020** says that reusable plastic bags are not a significant way of covid transmission.

"Given the most current scientific information we have, at this time we do not feel that reusable plastic bags or most other objects (referred to as "fomites" in the infection control world) or surfaces will serve as a significant source of infection for COVID-19 coronavirus in the general population, especially in light of the ease of spread of the virus from person-to-person via the close contact route and airborne droplets."

District of Columbia (Washington D.C.)

Updated: May 21, 2020

- All table items must either be single use and disposed of after use or cleaned and sanitized between uses. This includes utensils, dinnerware, drinkware, menus, tablecloths, and condiment containers (any items touched by customers).
- Employees must wear proper face coverings while working, and are required to wash their hands frequently. Employees must wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.

Policy: Reusable grocery bags have been permitted throughout.

Massachusetts

Updated: Dec. 13, 2020

- Condiments and similar products (e.g., salt, pepper, and salad dressing) should not be pre-set on tables and should instead only be provided upon request either in single-serving portions (e.g., individual packages or cups) or in serving containers that are sanitized between each use.
- Menus must be one of the following: 1) paper, single-use menus disposed after each use, 2) displayed menu (e.g., digital, whiteboard, chalkboard), 3) electronic menus viewed customers' phones / mobile devices, or 4) laminated reusable menus sanitized between each use
- Utensils and place settings must be either single-use or sanitized after each use; utensils should be rolled or packaged.

Policy: The Governor lifted the ban on reusable bags and is allowing 139 municipal plastic bag bans to go back into effect.

US STATES CONTINUED

Mississippi Updated: May 7, 2020

- The use of disposable menus is encouraged. All non-disposable menus shall be sanitized between each use.
- Buffet service: self-service buffets, food stations, and drink stations are prohibited. Cafeteria-style (worker served) buffets and food stations and drink stations are permitted with appropriate barriers in place.

New York Updated: Nov. 11, 2020

- Ensure all condiments provided directly to customers are in single-use disposable containers or reusable containers that are regularly cleaned/disinfected.
- If non-disposable menus are used, clean and disinfect the menus between each party's use.
- Use pre-packaged silverware or pre-rolled silverware. Silverware must be pre-rolled while wearing masks and gloves.
- Gloves are optional: If employees wear gloves during non-food preparation activities, ensure they replace gloves frequently, and encourage them to change gloves when switching tasks (e.g. serving customers to pre-rolling silverware). If employees do not wear gloves, ensure they frequently wash their hands with soap/water.

North Carolina Updated: Dec. 8, 2020

- Disinfect dining tables and booths, including condiment containers and reusable menus, between each use, allowing the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer.
- Reduce condiments and other items on the table for use between customers; provide condiments by request only; or provide disposable condiment packs.
- Use rolled utensils and discontinue preset table settings

Tennessee Updated: Oct. 1, 2020

- Frequently disinfect customer and front-of-house contact surfaces, including menus, tables/chairs, door handles, POS systems, pens, customer paging equipment, and other high-touch surfaces.
- Minimize use of self-serve buffets.
- The use of gloves should not be considered a replacement for frequent handwashing.

Washington Updated: Dec. 11, 2020

- Menu options: single-use, reusable disinfected after each use, board or sign, digital.
- Any condiments typically left on the table (ketchup, soy sauce, etc.) must be single-use or sanitized after each use.

Policy: The food safety code update regarding BYO items is moving forward to a final vote.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Food Standards – Australia and New Zealand

Updated: Aug. 21, 2020

- Food businesses are responsible for the measures they put in place to ensure food is safe and suitable, including food packaging. There is nothing in the Food Standards Code that specifically covers consumers bringing in their own reusable cups.
- **It is up to the business if they accept reusable cups.** Businesses should have a policy around how they accept reusable cups and cleaning and sanitizing arrangements when accepting them. Businesses are under no obligation to accept dirty cups.

Victoria, Australia

Updated: Dec. 6th, 2020

- There is currently **no evidence to suggest there is any benefit in switching to disposables**. It is important that the measures we take to minimize transmission are effective. The most effective measures you can take are practicing good hand hygiene and cleaning, with particular focus on shared, frequently touched surfaces.
- Normal washing of dishes in hot water (or better still, a dishwasher) using detergent is likely to completely inactivate any coronavirus present.
- More frequent cleaning of shared surfaces, this could include door handles (front door, fridge/freezers, toilets/bathrooms), tables and chairs (arm rests or areas used to pull out the chair) salt and pepper shakers, sugar bowls, communal cutlery containers.
- Their [Summer Guidelines](#) (updated Dec. 6th, 2020) state that “Venues may continue to use their cutlery, crockery and beverage containers with appropriate hygiene, cleaning and sanitation processes in place. Disposable serving ware is not required.” This guidance also **accepts customer-brought reusable beverage cups** and **allows for reusable takeaway schemes** (with proper sanitation)!

Queensland, Australia

Updated: Dec. 14th, 2020

- No mention of disposable v. reusable foodware in latest guidance.
- Earlier guidance allows reusable dishware for dine-in if proper dishwashing capabilities exist.
- BYO cup and container programs are no longer endorsed.

HONG KONG

Hong Kong, one of the most densely populated places in the world, has been recognized for controlling COVID-19 outbreaks and still maintaining restaurant reusable container programs ([Sierra Club](#)).

HK General COVID-19 Guidance

Black Sheep Restaurants COVID-19 Playbook

Updated: March, 2020

- Eliminate buffets.
- Diners have their temperatures checked, and use a freshly sterilized pen to sign a health declaration form.
- Body temperature checks and hand sanitizer will be given to guests upon arrival at establishments.
- Keep small inventories. Limit menu items.

SINGAPORE

Enterprise Singapore

Updated: March, 2020

- As more customers are expected to order takeaways during this period, we strongly encourage everyone to bring their own clean and reusable containers when buying food. This will not only help to reduce the amount of waste generated, but will also ease the demand on disposable food containers. Establishments should allow customers to do so when ordering takeaways.
- Any communal amenities (e.g. drinks dispensers and common condiments) must not be used. Self-service food samples, must not be provided.

Employees

- Use gloves when carrying out cleaning works and when handling waste.
- Use gloves when clearing items discarded on restaurants tables and/or in hotel rooms such as used tissue papers and toothpicks.
- Use clean disposable gloves when handling food.
- Do not use cracked or chipped crockery as germs can harbor in cracks.

SWITZERLAND

Updated: May 5, 2020

- Set up stations for hand hygiene: customers must be able to clean their hands with soap and water or disinfectant when entering the establishment.
- The table cover must be changed after each customer and cleaned before each use.
- For cleaning, preferably use disposable wipes. If cloths are used, these must be changed regularly, but at least twice a day.
- Open bins are emptied several times a day.
- The tablecloths used by customers are washed after each use (e.g. tablecloth).
- Dishes and cutlery (even unused) are washed in the dishwasher if possible (and not by hand). The washing programs are carried out at a temperature above 60 ° C.
- Either do not use common use items (e.g. seasonings on the table, cutlery baskets, butter dishes) or must clean them after each client.
- Updated [COVID-19 guidance](#) in Switzerland with restrictions on business operations. No further details about disposable or reusable foodservice items are mentioned.

GERMANY

Updated: June 26, 2020

- Before entering the restaurant, guests are to be informed about the possibility of cleaning their hands by providing disinfection options or hand washing facilities with soap and running water and the obligation to use them.
- The dishes and cutlery used by the guests must be washed with a suitable cleaning agent and a temperature of at least 60 degrees Celsius. If it is not possible to clean glasses in a dishwasher or in a dishwasher at 60 degrees Celsius or higher, hot water with a temperature of at least 45 degrees Celsius and detergent should be used in manual washing processes.
 - When using colder water, particular attention must be paid to a sufficient amount of detergent, longer retention time of the glasses in the sink as well as careful mechanical cleaning and subsequent drying of the glasses.
- Updated [COVID-19 guidance](#) in Germany as the country heads into lockdown over the holiday season relating to which industries are allowed to stay open. No further details about disposable or reusable foodservice items are mentioned.

SPAIN

- Not be allowed to place communal items - e.g. salt, oil, vinegar - on tables.
- Menus are not recommended; signs or boards should be prioritized.

ISREAL

- Menus must be disposable.
- Salt, pepper and other condiments must be disinfected after each sitting.

UK Updated: Dec. 13, 2020

- Providing only disposable condiments or cleaning non- disposable condiment containers after each use.
- Encouraging contactless payments where possible and adjusting location of card readers to social distancing guidelines (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable).
- Encouraging use of contactless ordering from tables where available. For example, through an ordering app.
- No mention of disposables v. reusable dishware / crockery / cutlery.

IRELAND Updated: May, 2020

- The Irish Food Safety Authority has updated their website to indicate there is "no ban" on reusables, does **not require disposables for food service**, and **allows for BYO beverage cup schemes**.
- Using disposable crockery and cutlery can lead to a false sense of security and can mean staff are not as conscious of hygiene practices when handling these items. It is not necessary to use disposable cups, cutlery or other disposable crockery.
- It is up to individual food businesses to decide if they wish to accept reusable cups or containers from customers. The use of these reusable cups and containers is still permitted.

SCOTLAND Updated: Dec. 14, 2020

- There is currently **no evidence that food or food packaging is a source or vehicle of transmission for the COVID-19 virus**.
- Provide single use, individually wrapped condiments rather than shared bottles on counter tops for customer use.
- Implementing contactless payment systems.