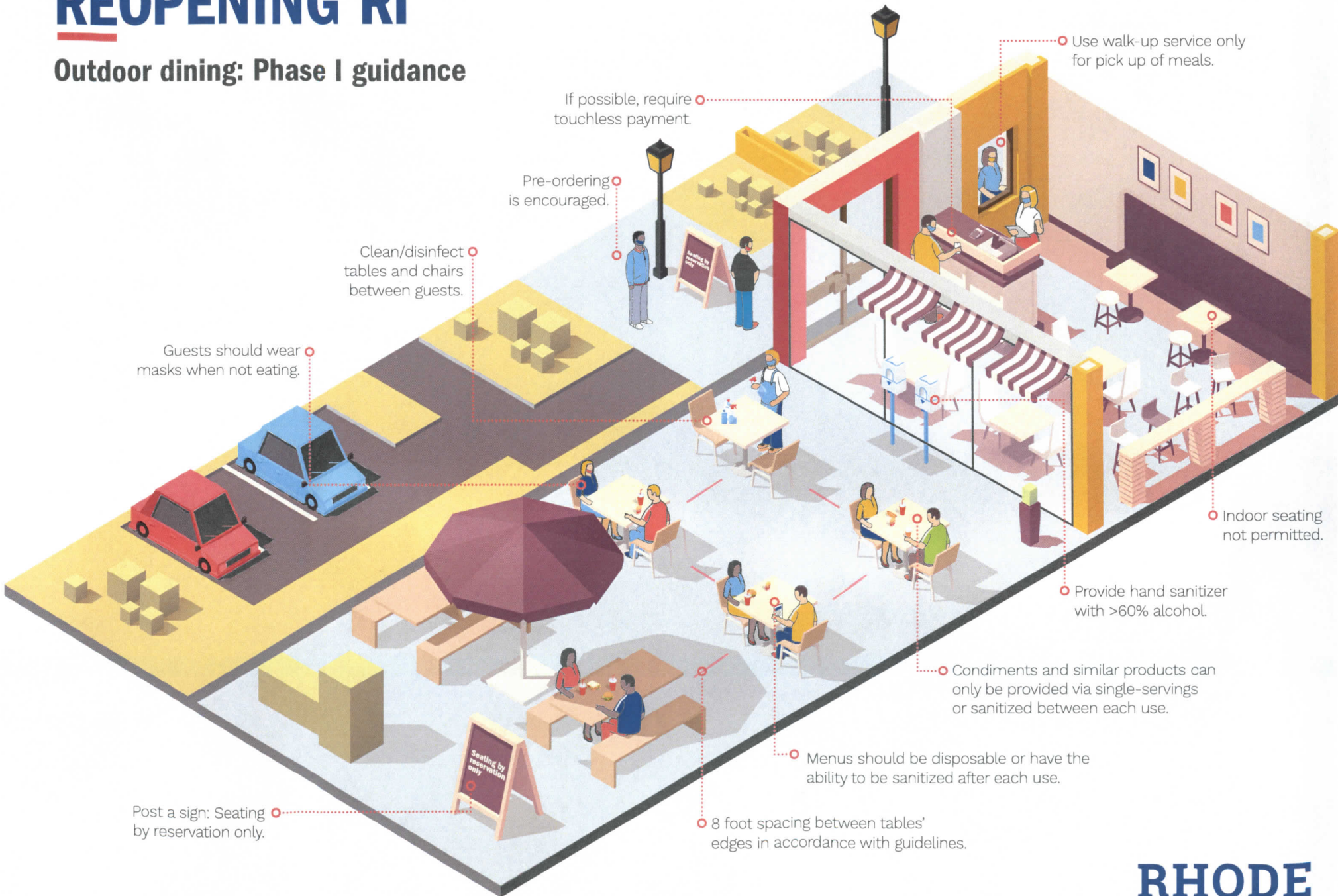


# REOPENING RI

## Outdoor dining: Phase I guidance



**RHODE  
ISLAND**

## Phase I guidelines for Restaurants

This guidance document describes procedures for restaurants, cafeterias, and other food service establishments (herein referred to as “restaurants” or “establishments”) operating and resuming services in a phased approach in accordance with established guidelines. If you have questions, please contact the Center for Food Protection at 401.222.2749 or 401.222.2750.

### Summary of Phase I operations

In addition to the sector-specific guidance outlined here, all businesses are required to comply with the phase I general guidance document available at: [www.reopeningri.com](http://www.reopeningri.com).

Beginning May 18, and subject to applicable municipal approval(s) relating to outdoor dining, restaurants may begin limited outdoor dining in addition to pick-up, delivery, and drive-through operations. This guidance includes capacity restrictions that will enable the sound and safe implementation of outdoor dining restaurant operations. Establishments are reminded that these guidelines will continue to be updated as additional activities are permitted in future phases of the reopening and in accordance with updates to CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) regulations and guidance. Establishments should also consult the following resources:

- National Restaurant Association’s COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: [https://go.restaurant.org/covid19-reopening-guide?utm\\_source=mkto&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=covid19-reopening-guidance](https://go.restaurant.org/covid19-reopening-guide?utm_source=mkto&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=covid19-reopening-guidance)
- The U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s Best Practices: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19>
- The U.S. Food & Drug Administration’s Reopening Guidance: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-re-opening-retail-food-establishments-during-covid-19-pandemic>

### Guidance for On-Premises Dining

- Dining must be restricted to outdoor dining areas only (indoor dining is not allowed at this time). All indoor dining areas and seating (such as within waiting areas) must remain closed to customers.
- Bar seating and service to standing customers is prohibited. Additionally, establishments should prevent customer access to potential gathering spaces on the premises (e.g. dance floors, courtyards). Customer seating anywhere other than at tables is prohibited
- Capacity is limited to no more than 20 seated tables at any given time, provided that in no instance shall an establishment’s seating capacity exceed its normal (previous) seating capacity.
- Individual parties may not exceed 5 people, consistent with existing RIDOH gathering size limits.
- Tables must:
  - Be separated by at least 8 feet;
  - Be at least 6 feet away from areas with regular customer foot traffic (e.g. routes to bathrooms, entrances, and exits). Tables may be closer together provided that physical, non-porous barriers (i.e. plexi-glass, plastic) of an appropriate height (tall enough to fully separate seated customers) are installed between tables, in accordance with standards established by RIDOH.
- Service for outdoor dining requires that reservations be made in advance electronically or by phone (no walk-ins).



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- Establishments should demarcate social distancing spaces in waiting areas and customer flows with tape or paint on the floor as well as signage.
- In order to facilitate social distancing among staff, establishments should consider (1) staggering employee shifts and break times, (2) designating separate work zones for servers, (3) spacing work stations and personnel positioning by 6 ft, when practicable, and (4) eliminating or minimizing the use of shared equipment.
- Establishments should consider designating separate entrances and exits for customers, where practicable, to promote one-way customer traffic.
- Establishments that provide outdoor dining may offer bathroom access to customers with reservations provided that:
  - Establishments make adjustments to promote social distancing within bathrooms (alternating stalls, sinks, etc.), or take other steps as is practicable (including the posting of signage).
  - Establishments clean commonly touched surfaces in restrooms (e.g. toilet seats, doorknobs, stall handles, sinks, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers) frequently and in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Upon arriving at the premises for a reservation, the establishment must ensure that parties are directed to their table in a manner that respects social distancing guidelines.
- If access to an outdoor seating area (e.g. a deck or patio) requires walking through the interior of an establishment, this is permitted, provided that the establishment adequately maintains social distancing standards and minimizes the amount of time spent indoors.
- All self-service food stations where meals need to be assembled by the customer (e.g. salad bars and buffets) are prohibited.
- Condiments and similar products (e.g. salt, pepper, and salad dressing) can only be provided via single-servings (e.g. individual packages or cups) unless provided upon request and sanitized between each use.
- Establishments must use one of the following: (1) paper menus that are immediately disposed after use, (2) digital, electronic, whiteboard, or chalkboard menus, or (3) reusable menus that are sanitized after each use.
- Utensils and dishware used for table service must either (1) be disposable and discarded between parties or (2) be removed, sanitized, and replaced between parties. Utensils should be rolled or packaged.
- Self-service drink refills are not allowed. Any drink refill must use clean dishware (sanitized between use) or new.
- Valet services are prohibited.
- Establishments should increase ventilation rates and outdoor air circulation in kitchens and other functional indoor areas (e.g. kitchens, food prep areas), when safe and practicable.
- Outdoor table service is allowed, provided that servers, bussers, and other customer-facing staff minimize time spent within 6 feet of customers.
- Establishments shall maintain an employee work log and retain the names and contact information of individuals placing reservations for a period of at least 30 days and make this information available to RIDOH upon request for the purposes of contact tracing.

Where not specified above, all organizations should follow the general guidance from the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding gathering sizes and social distancing. Please refer to the Phase I general guidance document for businesses found at <http://www.reopeningri.com/>



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## Guidance for Pick-up, Drive-through, and Delivery

Establishments should follow the FDA guidelines for pick-up, drive-through, and delivery operations, found here: <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-retail-food-stores-restaurants-and-food-pick-up-delivery-services-during-covid-19#pickupdelivery>

In addition to applicable guidance for on-premise dining, restaurants providing pick-up, drive-through, and delivery should take the following steps to assist customers with social distancing:

- Encourage customers to place remote orders online or by phone.
- Offer curbside pick-up (i.e. not allowing customers indoors) where practicable.
- Demarcate 6-foot spacing in any lines (e.g. by using tape and/or with signage, rope/belt stanchions, or other methods).
- Demarcate a 6-foot distance between each pick-up or payment location (e.g. counter, table, register).
- Demarcate a 6-foot distance between the waiting line for customers and any pick-up or payment locations.
- Close any waiting areas and demarcate 6-foot spacing for pick-up lines. Establishments may use the non-critical retail guidance (1 customer per 300 sf of floor area) as a rule of thumb for determining how many customers should be allowed in a space at a time for takeout operations.
- Install physical, non-porous barriers (i.e. plexi-glass, plastic) in accordance with standards established by RIDOH at key points of customer interaction (e.g. pick-up areas, payment stations).

## Payment

- Establishments should use contactless and/or cashless payment methods where feasible.
- Establishments should encourage staff handling customer transactions to wash their hands with increased frequency.
- To the extent customer contact is required in processing transactions (e.g. entering a pin number, signing a receipt), the establishment should take special measures to ensure contacted areas (e.g. payment devices, pens, cardholders) are sanitized frequently (e.g. after each use).

## Screening procedures

- RIDOH requires that establishments screen employees, customers, and visitors entering an establishment. People whose responses to screening questions indicate they are sick, or who show visible signs of illness, must be denied entrance and instructed to isolate. Employers may supplement screening questions with temperature checks. Please review the phase I general business guidance document for more details on screening. Screening of customers and visitors may consist of self-screening as guided by posted signage.
- In addition to screening for COVID-19 symptoms and risk factors as outlined in the general guidance, restaurants should inform customers upon securing a reservation of screening requirements and notify customers that they should not dine at the restaurant if any member of their party does not meet screening standards. This notification can be done by phone, text, email, or verbally.

## Face masks and other personal protective equipment

- In furtherance of the requirement that all employees, customers, and members of the general public wear face coverings/masks when social distance cannot be easily, continuously, and measurably maintained, customers are required to wear face masks when entering or exiting the restaurant,



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when in a common area (e.g. hallway or restroom), or when otherwise traveling within or through the restaurant.

## Enhanced cleaning and/or disinfecting procedures

- Prior to reopening, an establishment should conduct a thorough cleaning of the facility, including all dining, kitchen, bathroom, and commonly-touched areas.
- Outdoor dining tables fall into the category of frequently touched surfaces, and restaurants must clean each table, chair, and other commonly touched surfaces related to that table in accordance with CDC guidelines, and between parties.
- Establishments must make hand washing facilities (with running soap and water) or hand sanitizer available to all employees and customers. Hand sanitizer should be made available at the establishment's entrances and exits, as well as in dining areas, when practicable.
- Establishments must clean bathrooms, pick-up locations, payment stations, and other commonly-touched or customer-facing areas in accordance with the CDC guidelines documented in the general business guidelines.
- Establishments should remind employees of pre-existing food safety regulations, healthy handwashing practices, and the importance of regular cleaning.

## Implementing Guidance

- Establishments must designate an employee to implement and monitor for compliance with social distancing measures, sanitization, and other standards included in this guidance. This employee may be the Food Safety Manager; however, establishments may designate an alternative employee.
- Establishments should institute employee training programs on these standards.
- Establishments should post signage, visible to customers, that communicates expected social distancing, mask wearing, and customer screening policies.