

# Environmental Health Division

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## Improved Guidance for Bars Reopening

### COVID-19

This guidance is developed in accordance with the Public Health Orders, 2020 to control, suppress and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and for the protection of all persons within the Territory. This document is intended to be territory-wide guidance to assist Bars, Nightclubs and Pub owners/operators with making informed decisions and to reduce opportunities for transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a SARS-2 coronavirus that has spread worldwide. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted via respiratory droplets through coughing, sneezing and talking; and touching contaminated surfaces. The signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to that of other respiratory illness. They include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath; in severe cases it may cause pneumonia, severe respiratory syndrome, organ failure and even death.

Bars, Nightclubs, Pub owners / operators should continue to follow the standards set forth by the Environmental Health Division to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 within the community.

### Employee Health

Employees **MUST NOT** report to work if they have symptoms of COVID-19, including fever, respiratory symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or loss of the sense of taste/smell. If in doubt, call the COVID-19 Hotline at 852-7650. In an emergency, where one may be seriously ill or their life is at risk call 911. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care center or the hospital.

Employees who present symptoms or become ill while at work **MUST** be immediately separated from others and sent home.

Employees absent from work due to contact with symptomatic or ill person or suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, should contact the National Public Health: Disease Surveillance Unit or COVID-19 Hotline for advisement. Employees **MUST NOT** return to work unless certified by a Medical Doctor. See At-Home Quarantine and Isolation Guidance.

Employees with a cough, runny nose, jaundice, diarrhea, vomiting, should **NOT** be permitted at work.

Employers should document and communicate sick policies to employees. Flexible sick leave policies should be considered to allow for the adherence to Public Health Measures.

Employers can consider the use of a touchless infrared thermometer to check the temperature of their employees each day before entering the establishment. Any person, who has a temperature of 100.4°F and above, should not be allowed to work until they have no fever and no evidence of COVID-19 symptoms. \*Follow guidelines on Taking Temperature\*

### **Signs and Messages**

Display signs, flyers and posters throughout the facility and in highly visible location (at the entrance, waiting area, restrooms, hallways, outdoor spaces, VIP, etc.) that promotes everyday protective measures such as proper hand hygiene, practicing physical distancing, proper use of face covering, proper respiratory and cough etiquette, etc.

Frequent reminders of health and safety protocols should be made by the disc jockey or host, at least every 30mins.

### **Hand Hygiene and Employee Practices**

A hand hygiene station must be placed at the entrance of the establishment for use by patrons and employees. This can either be a hand washing sink equipped with liquid soap and paper towel or an alcohol based >60% hand sanitizer.

All Employees **MUST** perform hand hygiene before entering and leaving the workplace. Hands must be washed under running water using liquid soap for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Employees (bartenders/servers) **DO NOT** have the option of replacing hand washing with hand sanitizers. All bartenders/servers **MUST** frequently wash their hands under running water using liquid soap for a minimum of 20 seconds.

There **MUST** be a hand washing sink in the bar area for employees. This sink must not be used for the washing of glassware.

Employees (bartenders/servers) **MUST** avoid touching single service articles and glassware with unwashed hands. Pre-wrapped articles should be used, where applicable.

Employees (bartenders/servers) **MUST** avoid bare hand contact with garnishes (lemon, olives, cherries, etc.)

All employees must practice proper respiratory and cough etiquette. This requires covering the nose/mouth with a tissue for sneezing/coughing or sneezing/coughing in bent elbow away from

others. Used tissues must be thrown in the nearest receptacle. Hand hygiene **MUST** be performed immediately after.

### **Modified Layout and Social Distancing Procedures**

Limit capacity to allow for social distancing of at-least 6 feet. Change bar layouts to ensure that all customer parties remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing, remove tables and chairs that are not for use, etc.)

Regulate the entry of patrons into the establishment. Each proprietor must display the maximum capacity that their establishment can hold. This number must be validated by the Environmental Health Division. The number must be displayed on the outside of the establishment.

Bars, Nightclubs, Pub owners/operators should install tables and chairs and offer table service.

Prohibit Open Seating. Patrons should wait to be assigned to a designated table/area by an employee (host, bartender, server, etc.)

Patrons should restrict movement to within their designated area or at designated table for the duration of their visit, unless they are going to the restroom, leaving the establishment, etc.

Placement of orders should be made through the wait staff, bartenders or servers. Congregation at the bar tops/counter tops is prohibited.

Utilize the use of outdoor space, where applicable. Limit capacity to allow for social distancing of at-least 6 feet amongst patrons.

Bar tops should be physically blocked off using plexi-glass. If bar stools are used, a physical distance **no less than 6ft.** must be adhered to.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

Develop a cleaning schedule showing **who, what, when and how** the establishment will be cleaned.

Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products. The Environmental Health Division recommends  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup bleach per gallon of water for disinfection. Owners can refer to <https://bvi.gov.vg/media-centre/environmental-health-recommends-approved-list-disinfectants> for the list of approved disinfectants.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as (door handles, countertops/bar tops, cash registers, receipt trays, work stations, seats, tables, equipment handles, credit card machines, sink handles, sinks, toilet handles, toilet, etc.) at-least three times per day.

Wash, rinse, and sanitize all utensils and store them in a safe area. Use 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 gallon of water for sanitization.

Consider using disposable food service items (e.g. cups). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that items are washed, rinsed and sanitized, whether manually or in a dish washer.

Seats, tables, tools, and equipment (e.g. credit card machines, pens, etc.) must be properly cleaned and disinfected between patrons.

Employees must wash their hands for at-least 20 seconds after handling used food service items.

Bars, Nightclubs, Pubs that serve food must avoid the sharing of items such as menus, condiments, utensils, etc. and adhere to Food Safety Standards. **See Food Business Guidance for further details - <https://bvi.gov.vg/covid-guidance>.**

Frequently clean and disinfect floors, walls, and other facility access areas.

Hot water is essential for the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, utensils, equipment, etc.

### **Face Covering**

All employees and patrons must wear appropriate face covering while in the establishment.

If wearing a disposable face mask, discard properly in receptacle when wet or soiled. Perform hand hygiene and replace with a new face mask. If wearing a fabric mask, remove and place wet or soiled mask in a plastic bag. Perform hand hygiene and replace with a clean fabric mask.

Employers must maintain extra or back-up supply of mask for employee and/or customer use.

### **Ventilation**

Ensure that air conditioning systems are cleaned and maintained every 2-3 months.

Increase the exchange of indoor and outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors.

### **Water Systems**

There should be potable running water throughout the facility. Provide a backup supply of water in the event the government supply is turned off or no longer available.

### **Physical Barriers and Guides**

Physical barriers (plexi-glass), such as sneeze guards and partitions, should be installed particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g. bar tops, disc jockey booth, etc.)

## **Record Keeping**

Recording of name and other information **MAY** be obtained upon entry or by other means, and made available to the Public Health Unit for the purposes of contact tracing.

## **Games & Activities**

Activities and Games must follow all social distancing, hand hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection guidelines. Examples of games and activities include:

- **Music** may be permitted under the following conditions:

Lowered at the level of conversation

**\*This is to reduce the need for shouting and/or yelling amongst patrons and employees\***

- **Dancing** may be permitted in a specific area under the following conditions:

Use of face covering and,  
Physical distancing of at-least 6ft amongst patrons

**\*Area should be demarcated with social distancing markers or barrier of at-least 6ft apart\***

- **Karaoke** may be permitted under the following conditions:

Proper cleaning and disinfection of tools and equipment and,  
Use of face covering and physical distancing of at-least 6 feet by performer(s) and spectators

- **Pool** may be permitted with the following conditions:

Proper cleaning and disinfection of tools and equipment, and  
Use of face covering and physical distancing of at-least 6 feet by the spectators

- **Dominoes** may be permitted under the following conditions:

Proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and equipment,  
Use of face covering,  
Use of appropriately sized table (e.g. 3X4 ft.), and  
Physical distancing of at-least 6 feet by the spectators

## **Restrooms**

All bars/nightclubs **MUST** have a functioning restroom facility for their customers. There must be pipe borne water and an emergency supply of water in the event the government supply is turned or no longer available.

User should cover the toilet bowl with the lid before flushing.

Clean and disinfect **ALL** restroom surfaces including floors, sinks, faucets, toilet bowls and toilet handle. Mount toilet paper and paper towel. Place lined trash can by the door. Remove anything that does not have to be in the restrooms

## **Patrons Obligation and Practices**

All patrons **MUST** adhere to the measures of hand hygiene, social distancing, and wearing of a face covering as outlined in the Public Health (COVID-19 Control and Suppression Measures), Order, 2020. Patrons are subject to penalties for the violation of control and suppression measures set forth in the Public Health Orders.

## **General**

Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be achieved in relation to a particular activity, businesses should consider whether that activity needs to continue for the business to operate, if so, take all the mitigating actions possible to reduce the risk of transmission between their staff and customers/patrons. Mitigating actions include:

- Further increasing the frequency of hand washing and surface cleaning.
- Keeping the activity time involved as short as possible.
- Using screens or barriers (plexi-glass) to separate people from each other.
- Reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using ‘fixed teams or partnering’ (so each person works with only a few others).
- Public Health Control Measures (social distancing, wearing of face covering, etc.) applies to all parts of a business, not just the place where people spend most of their time, but also entrances and exits, break rooms and bathrooms and similar settings.

Bar owners/operators should designate an employee to monitor and enforce Public Health Control Measures, relative to hand hygiene, social distancing, wearing of face covering, cleaning and disinfection, etc.