

# Making Plans To Open Together



By: Rey O'Day, NICA Executive Director

IAFE and NICA are in discussion with each other regarding our shared belief that we are ready for our fairs and events to make plans to open and our contracted vendors to return to work. How do we do that? In a recent interview with Carnival Warehouse, IAFE President and CEO Marla Calico cited one of the bigger obstacles right now is the “inconsistency, the patchwork of restriction and mandates made by the over 2,800 County Health Departments and state authorities across the United States.” Let’s reach out together and start communicating with these important agencies now.

We know successful business partnerships are based on give and take discussions held in trusting relationships. We will not open without good working relationships with our local

health departments. We need clarity and consistency regarding reasonable/legal/safe and required actions; and they need assurance that those will be communicated, completed, and

enforced. We all need confirmation of support.

IAFE and NICA are developing an action strategy that includes articles, written materials, Health Department meeting

checklists, podcasts, questions to ask, social media discussions, webinars, panels, and Convention sessions.

To begin this conversation, I am sharing an article



I wrote for *NICA News* with some safety actions that are becoming common and acceptable in the food and beverage industry.

### Together We Will Be Prepared To Open Concession Stands

During the last few weeks I have been asked many times over “What should we be doing in order to be prepared to open our businesses at fairs?” After reading articles and numerous CDC and Health Department guidelines and participating in many conversations, I have noticed that there are some guidelines and suggestions that are generally accepted across the country for other types of food service situations like restaurants, food trucks and theme parks to safely open. Here is a list of the redundant ones where I suggest we focus our attention.

#### **Beverage Service:**

Because no service item can be exchanged back and forth, refill cup programs may change. The guest can purchase the novelty cup; however, the refill would be given to the guest in a one-time use cup that they would then pour into their own novelty, refill cup. Also, since drinking fountains will be disabled, be prepared to provide a small cup of water to patrons for taking pills or quenching thirst. Self-serve beverages will not be allowed.



**Condiments:** Self-serve shared items like sprinkled spices, pumped condiments, straws, and cutlery and napkin dispensers most likely will not be allowed. A package with napkin and cutlery inside and individually wrapped straws, spices and condiments will probably be acceptable.

**Contactless Payment:** Expect cashless options to expand as new payment technology solutions are created; however, cash and digital transactions will probably coexist. During the pandemic, patrons have become used to a variety of touch free payment methods like cash trays, debit & credit cards, smart



cards, e-wallet, key fob, smart phones and other mobile devices. Perhaps a separate line may need to be created for cash transactions.

**Employees:** When they arrive for work, take their temperature and confirm with them they feel healthy. If you notice anything that makes you think they do not feel well (sneezing, sniffles, etc.) do not assign them work, send them home. Document all employee interactions.

**Hand Sanitizer:** It seems that hand sanitizer is expected to be at every stand for employee and guest use. These would not be shared containers or pump operated.



**Hand Washing:** Whether hands are in gloves or not, they must be washed (20 seconds) or hand sanitized often. Do not touch your face with your hands at all. Require anyone entering or exiting a stand at any time to wash their hands before they do anything else and dry them with paper towels.

**Menus:** In most concessions, menu items are listed on window signage or menu boards. If there is guest access to either, they will need a consistent schedule for cleaning. If menus are being given to guests, they must be single usage or cleanable.

**Ordering:** Expanded mobile food ordering and pick up will be expected. To be efficient and successful, this will require technology and well thought out procedures. (Can orders be made before arriving or while walking around, can a pick-up time be chosen, and a will call window designated?) Pre-ordering

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and will call will help shorten guest lines. Orders could also be taken in line by masked order takers and then sent to the kitchen by whatever means chosen by the operator.



**PPE:** At the beginning of each shift, distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as a face mask and gloves to each employee with the requirement that they must be worn during the entire work shift. Be sure all personal items (i.e. phones, purses,) are out of reach.

**Sanitizing:** In addition to the cleaning usually done, crews with masks, perhaps eye shields, gloves and nontoxic supplies will need to constantly be cleaning/sanitizing tables, chairs, counters, railings, and trash containers in full view of the customer in order for them to feel comfortable. All personal items will have to be stored out of view.

**Social Distancing:** When in the stand or out of the stand, workstations will need to be organized to support being six feet apart from each other and the guest. This may include Plexiglas barriers on counters or between guest and cashier or between workstations. Stands will have to be far enough apart to allow customer lines to social distance. Guest signage should indicate where to stand so as to be six feet apart.

**Training:** This refers to training that would be in addition to the usual health practices, food preparation, guest

services, and cooking training you already conduct. Be sure that there is signage, photos, videos, and check lists stating clearly what is expected of employees. Be prepared to communicate with people that have a different first language. Stress that they are to follow all the fair rules of entrance, exit, and social distancing when coming and going to their workstations.



*Note: Please remember all the above is only a best-guess opinion. Use it as it makes sense to you.*

Fairs will reopen. Now is the time to formulate an active plan so that you will be ready to reopen with them. Visit your health departments and listen to what they are thinking, visit food concessions that are open and see what they are doing, and share your plans with your fair managers. All business relies on relationships: don't let this year become out-of-sight-out-of-mind; be curious, ask questions and let it be known that you are an IAFE or NICA member who is ready to help. **Together We Can Be Fair Strong!!** ■

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