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GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



South Carolina – Opening Hotels and Event Venues Updated 10/2/2020

The guidelines detailed in this plan are driven by three major considerations: safety, gradual, and phasing in. We respectfully submit this balanced and strategic approach using best practices is the optimal approach for the state – our fellow citizens and our guests.

South Carolina is committed to following the protocols established by Governor McMaster regarding safe social distancing and this heightened awareness of public safety. South Carolina's hospitality industry is waiting for the return of its guests and, in the meantime, we are preparing for the reopening by suggesting doing the following things to welcome customers:

Lobby and Common Areas

- Entrance doors that do not open/close automatically should consider having a door attendant.
- Arrange furniture in the lobby to incorporate social distancing guidelines.
- Touchless Hand Sanitizer stations if available. At a minimum hand sanitizer available throughout lobby reception areas, suggested areas to include but not limited to elevator landing and employee entrances, but could also include any other reception areas, entire hotel lobby areas, restaurant entrances, meeting spaces, elevator landings, pools, exercise areas and other public areas as applicable to the property.
- Public-area cleaning frequency increased. Cleaning products and protocols shall include EPA-approved disinfectants that meet CDC requirements for use and effectiveness against viruses, bacteria, and other airborne and blood-borne pathogens, including COVID-19.
- Signage in lobbies and public areas to remind guests of social distancing protocols.
- Frequent disinfection of all high-touch areas such as door handles, elevator buttons, handrails, telephones, and remote controls.
- Surfaces in public areas and guest rooms are required to be cleaned thoroughly with hospital-grade disinfectants.
- One person or one family/household per elevator car. (post appropriate signage to promote this policy on each floor)

- Signage to be posted in public areas and service areas indicating the proper way to wear, handle, and dispose of masks.
- Appointments should be taken for the workout room to contain the number of guests to ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained.
- Fitness centers closed multiple times each day for cleaning, and a limit on the number of guests permitted allowing for appropriate social distancing.

Front Desk:

- Plexiglass shield or similar protective barrier between front desk agent and customer.
- Key cards to be sanitized or discarded after each use.
- Digital key technology for check-in, accessing their rooms, or making special requests.
- All guests to be asked to fill out a declaration form detailing their recent travels.
- Reservation agents to ask guests about their health and travel and exposure to COVID-19 cases before booking a room.
- Contactless payment processes are encouraged.
- Self-parking options should be emphasized, where possible.
- If valet service is provided, disinfecting of contact points within the vehicle is required. Also, van and shuttle service shall be limited, and disinfecting of contact points will be required.
- Areas, where guests or employees can gather, should be shut off if possible, and if not, clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing, and where possible, encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits.

Swimming Pools:

According to the CDC, the virus that causes COVID-19 cannot be spread to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, spas, or water play areas. However, the opportunity for transmitting the virus does exist in surrounding areas. In addition to the above safe-practices, swimming pools should comply with the following additional guidelines to further minimize the potential for transmission and spread of COVID-19 in and around pools:

- Prohibiting sick patrons from going to the pool area.
- Implementing policies and/or procedures that limit exposure by using social distancing (6 feet or greater) when setting up pool deck furniture, re-enforcing the social distancing using signage and/or floor/deck stickers, and/or by limiting the time a party can remain in the pool/on the pool deck.

- Avoiding group events, gatherings, or meetings both in and out of the water if social distancing of at least 6 feet between people who don't live together cannot be maintained. [Exceptions include rescuing a distressed swimmer or other emergency response scenarios,]
- Staggering the use of communal spaces, when feasible.
- Asking parents to be responsible for ensuring that children stay at least 6 feet apart from people they don't live with at all times while on the pool deck or in the pool.
- Limiting any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Cleaning and disinfecting commonly used surfaces such as bathrooms, doors, handrails, ladders, gates, lawn chairs, drinking water fountains, picnic tables, etc. between each use by a different person, or at a minimum of once a day if unused.
- Encouraging all staff, patrons, and swimmers to wash their hands often and to cover their coughs and sneezes. Consideration should be given to providing hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) stations for use by all staff and patrons.
- Installing signs and/or examples of six-foot areas related to social distancing.
- Complying with SC Public Swimming Pool Regulation 61-51 is always required.
- Removing from service or regularly disinfecting sharable equipment (for example, kickboards, floats, etc.)
- Considering lane reservations to allow family groups to use a lane or specific area of a pool.
- Considering a phased approach to opening that brings back lane swimming and a limited number of participant classes before opening for general swimming.
- Ensuring that lifeguards who are actively life-guarding are not also expected to monitor handwashing, use of cloth face coverings, or social distancing of others. Lifeguards should continue to follow universal precautions when rendering first aid of any type to patrons.
- Following CDC guidelines regarding cleaning and disinfecting.
- Following, to the extent they apply to your facility, the CDC Considerations for Public Pools, Hot Tubs, and Water Playgrounds During COVID-19

Housekeeping:

- Enhanced cleaning standards throughout the hotel, including guest rooms, meeting spaces, common areas, and back-of-house spaces.

- Cleaning products that are EPA-approved for use against bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens, including COVID-19. (see EPA list here: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>)
- Housekeeping shall not enter a guest room during a stay unless specifically requested, or approved, by the guest.
- The room is left vacant for 24 hours after a guest checks out for deep cleaning.
- Disinfecting wipes will be placed in each guest room.
- Glassware, coffee cups, and multi-cup coffee makers should be removed. Single-serve coffee makers can remain provided disposable cups are used.
- Remove items from the minibar.
- Discontinue room service from dining or housekeeping.
- Guest room pens, paper, and guest directories may be removed and replaced with digital substitutes.
- Linens, towels, and laundry shall be washed per CDC guidelines, including washing items as appropriate following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Where possible, launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Dirty linen shall be bagged in the guest room to eliminate excess contact while being transported to the laundry facility.
- Extra / clean towels are available upon request.
- In the event of a presumptive case of COVID-19, the affected guest room shall be removed from service and quarantined for 96 hours. The guest room shall not be returned to service until undergoing an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting utilizing EPA-approved products within CDC guidelines.

Food and Beverage Operations:

(Pursuant to [Executive Order 2020-63](#) issued by Governor McMaster effective Friday, October 2, 2020, and to remain in effect until rescinded.)

Required Face Coverings:

All food and beverage employees and restaurant and event patrons must have a face covering (cloth mask or face shield), as feasible. (Other hotels employees not in food and beverage operations should be strongly encouraged to wear masks or cloth face coverings.)

- Face Coverings must be worn when not seated ie: walking into the establishment, going to the restroom, or moving about the restaurant or event area.
- Provide information to staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. Face covering should be placed and worn over the mouth and nose.
- Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
 - Babies and children younger than 2 years old
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face-covering without assistance
 - Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or personal protective equipment.
- Learn more on how to properly use the cloth face coverings at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Dining Room and Other Meal Spaces

- All hotel operations with a DHEC Retail Food Establishment Permit are required to meet the minimum education and training standards outlined in DHEC Regulation 61-25. At least one employee with the authority to direct and control food preparation and service shall be a food protection manager who has been certified by an accredited program. Only Conference for Food Protection ANSI-certified Food Protection Manager courses meets the requirements of 2-102.20.
- Restaurants should space indoor and outdoor tables at least six (6) feet apart, to the extent possible, to ensure that customers and patrons are at least six (6) feet apart from any other party or group.
- Discontinue self-service buffets or food stations to prevent customers and patrons from reusing service utensils to avoid potential physical contamination; however, employees may be permitted to dispense food via cafeteria-style buffet service. (See additional guidance document for standards and protocols)
- Sneeze and cough screens shall be present at all food displays and service areas.
- Do not place utensils on the table until the patron is seated and, if possible, use disposable single-use utensils.
- Remove common-use condiments, such as salt, pepper, and ketchup, from tables. These items should be provided upon request and cleaned and sanitized between uses if single-use options are not available.
- In self-service seating restaurants, signage should be placed on tables/booths which are not to be occupied so that proper social distancing can be maintained.

- Minimal items should be placed on guest tables to allow for effective disinfection in between each guest, including condiments, silverware, glassware, napkins, etc.
- All employees handling ready-to-eat food should wear gloves. This is not just for the safety of our guests, but also for their psychological sense of safety. Where gloves are not used, follow requirements in [R.61-25 Retail Food Establishments](#).
- Post in a publicly prominent place in your facility and on your website your commitment to:
 - Food safety
 - Staff safety training
 - Steps that you are taking to go above and beyond in providing safe food and a safe, enjoyable dining experience
 - Customer safety
 - Customer responsibility
- Refer to the [SCRLA restaurant guidelines](#) for additional information and guidance.

Sale of Alcoholic Beverages:

- The sale or consumption of beer, wine, or alcoholic liquor on the licensed premises of all persons or businesses authorized to sell beer, wine, or alcoholic liquor in the State of South Carolina (collectively, “Licensees”), as set forth below, is prohibited between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. the following day.

Meeting and Banquet Space:

- Implement maintain social distancing protocols to encourage attendees to be at least 6’ apart from one another.
- Registration areas should have markings on the floor to show guests where to stand for appropriate distancing.
- One-way entrance and exits into meeting rooms where possible.
- Minimize, modify, or discontinue services that allow customers and patrons to fill or refill their own beverage cups. When applicable have multiple stations arranged to avoid congregating based on the number of attendees.
- Multiple hands sanitizing stations in each room.
- Microphones on stands or handheld should be discouraged or cleaned after each speaker if used.
- A maximum of 6 people per 72” round. Each table needs to have at least six feet of separation from seating to seating in each direction.

- Maximum of 10 people per 500 square feet with a maximum of 250 attendees with social distancing in place.
- Provide signage at the registration area to inform all attendees that they should:
- Not to enter if they feel generally unwell
- Maintain a minimum of 6-foot distance
- Sneeze or cough into a cloth or tissue
- Not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact
- Refer to the Food and Beverage section and/or SCRLA restaurant guidelines for additional food service guidance and safety protocols.

Employee Safety Focus:

- Follow CDC and DHEC guidelines regarding employee health.
- Actively encourage and require employees who are sick, who have symptoms of COVID-19, who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who have recently had close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to stay at home, and should develop policies to encourage any such employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal or adverse employment action on this basis.
- Immediately excuse and exclude any employees indicating symptoms of COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the preceding fourteen (14) days.
- Employee health screens shall be conducted before or at the beginning of each shift, an employee survey, and screening process, which should include taking each employee's temperature before they begin their shift and inquiring about common symptoms of COVID-19.
- Heightened hygienic practices including peer observation and supervisor oversight to ensure staff is washing hands frequently and correctly, proper glove usage when used, and that staff avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Provide physical barriers such as Plexiglas between employees and customers when possible for counter-service ordering, food pick up areas, and host stands.
- Use technology solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction, mobile and menu tablets, text on arrival for seating, and contactless payment options.
- Immediately exclude any staff members indicating symptoms or that have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.