



RESTAURANTS OVERVIEW

The framework below represents the City of Boston’s operational recommendations for **Restaurants**. These operational recommendations incorporate the Commonwealth’s [Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Operators of Restaurants](#) and supplement them with recommendations based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and industry associations to offer best practices for ensuring social distancing and reducing risk at events as well as preparing and returning to the physical workplace, preparing the workforce, and ensuring continuity of operations.

These operational recommendations apply to both indoor and outdoor restaurant operations permitted during Phase 2 and Phase 3, Step 1 of the Commonwealth’s phased reopening plan and are subject to change by the City of Boston at any time based upon changes to the Commonwealth’s Workplace Safety Standards, CDC guidance, or other public health information or analysis.

While indoor table service is permitted, restaurants are encouraged to structure operations to operate as much as possible through outdoor table service and to strictly limit indoor table service to assure effective compliance with social distancing requirements and to limit activities within confined spaces. Restaurants must comply with these safety standards for providing dining services in all customer seating areas.

These operational recommendations provide City of Boston businesses with clarity about how to operate in Boston given its unique diversity, density, population, and built environment. Businesses, however, must comply with all current state standards at all times.

All actions undertaken to comply with Commonwealth standards and City of Boston recommendations must also comply with regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. In addition to these standards, event organizers should continue to abide by any and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, policies, certifications, and licensure requirements for their facility.

Following these recommendations will ensure greater public health and safety. The City of Boston strongly encourages people in vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, to continue to avoid unnecessary public outings and inessential services. Staff health is also a critical factor in whether restaurants can safely open and serve customers.



Key Considerations

- Reopening services will increase the risk of COVID-19 spread; thus, the goal is to know, communicate, and manage transmission risk.
- Programs, services, and industries must be altered—some significantly—for several months or longer until a vaccine or effective treatment is developed.
- All plans must include mechanisms for how programs and services can be quickly scaled back if COVID-19 cases and deaths begin to spike.
- Linguistically and culturally appropriate public messaging and communications are critical.
- The experiences and needs of those disproportionately affected will be overlooked if not explicitly considered in all plans.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MANDATORY STANDARDS

No activity at any restaurant shall occur without meeting these COVID-19 safety standards. These standards apply to all enterprises permitted to operate until rescinded or amended by the state, unless where sector-specific standards are applicable to part or all of the enterprise's activities, in which case enterprises must follow those sector-specific standards. The owner of the enterprise shall be responsible for meeting these standards:

- [Massachusetts Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standard for Restaurants](#)

OUTDOOR DINING

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MANDATORY STANDARDS

- Outdoor table service means service that is provided outside the restaurant building envelope, such as on a sidewalk, patio, deck, lawn, parking area, or other outdoor space.
 - All existing outdoor space (i.e., patio or roof deck) may be used for outdoor dining as long as seating is reconfigured to meet all social distancing and safety standards (see below).
- Outdoor table service may be provided under awnings or table umbrellas or other cover from the elements as long as at least 50 percent of the perimeter of any covered dining space remains open and unobstructed by any form of siding or barriers at all times.

CITY OF BOSTON OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- Any licensed premises in the City of Boston seeking to use outdoor space not currently authorized under its existing licensing agreement must receive approval from the Boston Licensing Board.



- A licensed premise is defined as a premise licensed by the Licensing Board for the City of Boston holding a valid Common Victualler or Alcoholic Beverage License.
- Any approval will be made on a temporary, non-precedent-setting basis due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.
- Any licensee granted a temporary extension must abide by all rules, regulations, laws, advisories, and guidelines issued by the city, state, and federal government, including all social-distancing requirements.
- All of the foregoing may be amended by the respective agencies at any time.
- In preparation to apply to extend a licensed premise to outdoor space, please refer to the following:
 - [Guidance for the extension onto outdoor public property](#) (sample documents and pictures included)
 - [Guidance for the extension onto outdoor private property](#)
- All licensed premises will adhere to the following process to seek extension approval:
 - Submit the initial questionnaire regarding a proposed temporary extension of the licensed premise onto outdoor space.
 - Information from the licensee will be collected to determine whether the proposed extension onto private property, public property, or both is feasible.
 - Extensions into the public way, whether sidewalks or streets, require evaluation by multiple departments to confirm doing so can be done while ensuring the safety of patrons and employees.
 - Upon initial review of the questionnaire, the Licensing Board will reach out by email to licensees regarding next steps, which may include completing a second questionnaire.
 - ◇ If a second questionnaire is required, a licensee must submit the following:
 - Safety Plan
 - Health, Safety, and Operations Plan
 - Manufacturer’s cut sheet and/or photographs of desired barriers
 - Copy of the Certificate of Inspection



City of Boston Restaurants Operational Recommendations—Phase Two
Issued Guidance: July 24, 2020

- Proof of legal right to occupy (private spaces)
- Recent photographs of the proposed extension space

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These additional safety guidelines and resources are available to support restaurants.

U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

- [OSHA – COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [OSHA – Enforcement Guidelines Webpage](#)
- [OSHA Fact Sheet](#) – Protecting Workers During a Pandemic

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [CDC – Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [CDC – Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#) (updated 3/21/20)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

List of EPA-approved disinfectants:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

U.S. Department of Labor

Information on employee leave rights:

- [Department of Labor Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)



RESTAURANTS OPERATIONAL CHECKLISTS

The following workplace safety standards are organized around four distinct categories covering Physical Space and Social Distancing; Management and Employee; Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hygiene Protocols; and Confirmed Cases. This Operational Guidance is based on the [Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Restaurants](#), updated as of July 6, 2020. *Please note: For all the following checklists, items listed in bold are standards that have been issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Items not listed in bold are additional standards required or recommended by the City of Boston.*

PHYSICAL SPACE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING CHECKLIST

Restaurant management and employee personnel must implement physical amendments and procedures to ensure social distancing is available and followed for all workers and customers. Restaurant operators should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>While indoor table service is permitted, restaurants are encouraged to structure operations to operate as much as possible through outdoor table service and to strictly limit indoor table service to assure effective compliance with social distancing requirements and to limit activities within confined spaces.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Restaurants must comply with the following sector specific social distancing rules for providing dining services in all customer seating areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tables must be positioned so to maintain at least a 6-foot distance from all other tables and any high-foot traffic areas (e.g., routes to bathrooms, entrances, exits); tables may be positioned closer if separated by protective/non-porous barriers (e.g., structural walls or plexiglass dividers) not less than 6 feet high installed between tables and high-foot traffic areas. ● The size of a party seated at a table cannot exceed six people. ● Restaurants may not seat any customers at the bar, but, subject to any applicable building and fire code requirements, bar areas may be re-configured to accommodate table seating that complies with all spacing and other requirements in these COVID-19 safety standards. ● All customers must be seated; eat-in service to standing customers (e.g., around bar areas) is prohibited. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restaurants may provide carry-out or delivery service, but all safety standards for table separation, size of party, and hygiene must be maintained for any indoor or outdoor table seating that is available to carry-out patrons. All other amenities and areas not employed for food and beverage service (e.g., dance floors, pool tables, playgrounds, etc.) must be closed or removed to prevent gathering of customers. 	
<p>Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between all individuals (workers, vendors, and customers) unless this creates a safety hazard due to the nature of the work or the configuration of the workspace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close or reconfigure worker common spaces and high density areas where workers are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms, eating areas) to allow 6 feet of physical distancing; redesign work stations to ensure physical distancing (e.g., separate tables, stagger workstations on either side of processing lines so workers are not face-to-face, use distance markers to assure spacing including in the kitchen area). Establish directional hallways and passageways for foot traffic if possible, to minimize contact (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to the restaurant). Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies. Prohibit lingering in common areas (e.g., waiting areas, bathrooms) and ensure social distancing in common areas by marking 6 feet spacing with tape or paint on the floor and signage. All customer-facing workers (e.g., servers, bus staff) must minimize time spent within 6 feet of customers. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Designate assigned working areas to workers where possible to limit movement throughout the restaurant and limit contact between workers (e.g., assigning zones to servers).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Stagger work schedules and staff meal and break times, regulating maximum number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Minimize the use of confined spaces (e.g., elevators, vehicles) by more than one individual at a time.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Require face coverings for all customers and workers at all times, except where an individual is unable to wear a face covering due to medical condition or disability.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Customers may remove face coverings while seated at tables.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Best Practices/Recommendations</p>	<p>Status</p>



Designate assigned working areas to workers where possible to limit movement throughout the restaurant and limit contact between workers (e.g., assigning zones to servers).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

Restaurant management and employee personnel must ensure these mandated staffing and operations requirements are being implemented and followed at all times. Restaurant management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
When possible, reservations or call-ahead seating should be encouraged; managers must ensure that diners waiting for tables do not congregate in common areas or form lines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
When taking reservations and when seating walk-in customers, restaurants should retain a phone number of someone in the party for possible contact tracing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Restaurants may not provide customers with buzzers or other devices to provide alerts that seating is available or orders are ready; restaurants should instead use no-touch methods such as audio announcements, text messaging, and notices on fixed video screens or blackboards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing, handwashing, and requirements for proper use of face coverings; • Modifying practices for serving to minimize time spent within 6 feet of customers; • Self-screening at home, including temperature or symptom checks; • Reinforcing that staff may not come to work if sick; • When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe; and, • Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Restaurant operators should establish adjusted workplace hours and shifts for workers to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

If you have any questions about the City of Boston’s operational recommendations for businesses, employers, and commercial landlords for return-to-work strategies for office workplaces, please email reopening@boston.gov.



Limit visitors and vendors on site; shipping and deliveries should be completed in designated areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers should not appear for work if feeling ill.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Restaurants must screen workers at each shift by ensuring the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100°F and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. • Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic. • Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official. • Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Anyone showing signs of illness may be denied entry.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers must stay home if feeling ill.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the employer for purposes of cleaning/disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and/or at the request of the LBOH.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Notify workers that they may not work if they test positive for COVID-19 (they should be isolated at home) or are found to be a close contact of someone with COVID-19 (they should be quarantined at home).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Post notice to workers and customers of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Designate the Person in Charge (105 CMR 590) for each shift to oversee implementation of the guidelines in this document.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<p>Restaurants will be allowed to maximize outdoor dining space, including patios and parking lots where available, where municipal approval is obtained.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Additional on-site amenities and services may only open and operate when those amenities or services would otherwise be authorized to operate under the Commonwealth’s Phased Reopening Plan and then must adhere to all sector-specific safety protocols, available on the Reopening Plan website, applicable to the amenity or service. Examples include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pool tables, darts, and other indoor games: Must remain closed. ● Musical and other performances: Must follow the latest Theater and Performance guidance document. ● Venue guidance, including distance between performers and between performers and attendees. Performances at indoor venues may not include singing or the playing of wind or brass instruments. ● Dance floors: Must remain closed until Phase 4. ● Gift shops: Must follow the latest Retail guidance document. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Additional City of Boston recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate workplace policies clearly, frequently, and through various channels. ● Consider daily team all-staff conference calls or virtual check-ins to disseminate information and policy changes. ● Prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace by keeping health information private in compliance with state and federal laws. ● Uphold stringent anti-discrimination policies, with a zero-tolerance policy for any assumption of COVID-19 risk or infection status based on race or country of origin and offer a safe way for workers to report an instance of discrimination. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
<p>Encourage use of technological solutions where possible to reduce person-to-person interaction (e.g., contactless payment, mobile ordering, text on arrival for seating).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Workers who are particularly high risk to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home or arrange an alternate work assignment.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

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Consider setting aside specific hours of operation exclusively for vulnerable populations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Limit employees to discrete work zones to minimize overlap where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Restaurant operators should perform symptom-screening checks as customers enter the restaurant. Encourage customers to return home if there are potential COVID-19 symptoms indicated by the customer or possibly by someone in the household. Draft: “In the last 2–14 days, have you or a person in the household been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and/or are experiencing the following COVID-19 symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever or chills ● Cough ● Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing ● Fatigue ● Muscle or body aches ● Headache ● New loss of taste or smell ● Sore throat ● Congestion or runny nose ● Nausea or vomiting ● Diarrhea” 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
If possible, implement a reservation system for the restaurant. Use the reservation system to contact customers with reservations 24 hours before their scheduled arrival to confirm their reservation and ask if they or someone in their household is exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms. If the customer answers in the affirmative, the customer should be reminded that he or she should only visit the facility if he or she does not pose a health risk to other customers or restaurant staff. Such communication can be done via app, email, or text, if possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Use an Emergency Notification System and maintain updated contact information for employees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Provide employees with personal protective equipment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and for any vendors or contractors entering the facility. Make sure the temperature and/or symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

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If providing temperature screenings on-site is not feasible, self-screening at home may be implemented. Ensure that screening is performed prior to the worker leaving the home for his or her shift and follows CDC guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
When possible, allow for flexibility in working hours so employees can commute during non-peak times.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage employees to wash their hands as quickly as possible upon entering the workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND HYGIENE CHECKLIST

Restaurant management and employees must ensure these mandated cleaning and hygiene requirements are implemented and being followed at all times. Management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
All workers must wash their hands frequently and table servers wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer between each table interaction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Ensure access to handwashing facilities on-site, including soap and running water, and allow sufficient break time for workers to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol should be made available at entrances, exits, and in the dining area.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Supply workers at workplace locations with adequate cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Post visible signage throughout the site to remind workers and customers of hygiene and safety protocols.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Self-serve, unattended buffets, topping bars, drink stations, and other communal serving areas must remain closed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Menus must be one of the following: paper, single-use menus disposed after each use; 2) displayed menu (e.g., digital, whiteboard, chalkboard); or electronic menus viewed on customers’ phones/mobile devices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Utensils and place settings must be either single-use or sanitized after each use; utensils should be rolled or packaged. Tables should not be pre-set to reduce opportunity for exposure.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

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Tables and chairs must be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly between each seating.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, staircases).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Implement procedures to increase cleaning/disinfecting in the back-of-house. Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants. Food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized before use with a sanitizer approved for food contact surfaces. Non-food contact surfaces must be frequently cleaned.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
In the event of a presumptive or actual positive COVID-19 case of a worker, patron, or vendor, the restaurant must be immediately shut down for 24 hours and then must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with current CDC guidance before re-opening.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
Open windows and doors to increase airflow where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Establish a Response Action protocol to clean spaces where there were confirmed cases of infection and/or exposure and notification to the workplace coordinator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If management is notified of a positive case in a building, close the section of the building to which that person had access for deep cleaning. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Prohibit any mutual touching of equipment or supplies between guests or workers without sanitation between uses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

CONFIRMED CASES CHECKLIST

Confirmed COVID cases for Restaurant employees or previous customers will require review and adherence to this checklist.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace (including from other employees, guests, vendors, delivery personnel, or anyone accessing the facility), the employer should notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) where the workplace is located and work with them to trace likely contacts in the workplace and advise workers and others who may have accessed the space to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of others who	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<p>accessed the same space may be recommended consistent with guidance and/or at the request of the LBOH.</p> <p>In the event of an employee notifying an employer of a positive COVID case, the employer should obtain consent from the employee to share his or her personal information with the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC). If the employer does not have consent to share the employee’s information, the employer can still call BPHC for general guidance on closures and identifying close contacts. The employer cannot reveal information about the confirmed case to close contacts due to privacy concerns. This function may be supported by public health agencies other than BPHC depending on the location of the confirmed case.</p> <p>When calling BPHC, employers should be able to identify whether the employee worked 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or was asymptomatic 48 hours prior to the test. The employer should also be able to identify if the employee was wearing a face covering at work, details of work conditions, locations of work (i.e., inside, outside), proximity to other employees or attendees, level of interaction with the public, and barriers or face coverings that were in place.</p> <p>The employer will help the LBOH to identify employee(s) who may have had contact with the confirmed case. The employer will notify these employees of the need to quarantine. The employer and LBOH will reach out to affected healthcare providers. Contacts to a confirmed case should be encouraged to have a COVID-19 test. Any employee who is identified as a close contact should not return to work for at least for 14 days.</p>	
<p>In the event of a presumptive or actual positive COVID-19 case of a worker, patron, or vendor, the restaurant must be immediately shut down for 24 hours and then must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with current CDC guidance before re-opening.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Best Practices/Recommendations</p>	<p>Status</p>
<p>Workers who test positive for COVID-19 should not be allowed to return to work until cleared by a medical professional as being symptom-free for at least 3 days and having been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Any previous customer who has notified the restaurant operator of a positive case should be encouraged to contact LBOH. The restaurant operator should also contact any employee and known customer(s) who may have come into contact with that customer.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Maintain and review customer and employee records as necessary for information to support contact-tracing efforts.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing