

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



Considerations for Casinos and Gaming Operations

Updated Oct. 29, 2020 [Print](#)

As some casinos and gaming operations resume in some areas of the United States, CDC offers the following considerations for ways in which casino and gaming operators can help protect staff and customers and slow the spread of COVID-19. Casinos and gaming operations can determine, in collaboration with [local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal health officials](#), whether and how to implement these considerations, making adjustments to meet the needs and circumstances of the local community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community. For more information on bars and restaurants within casinos, please see [CDC's Considerations for Restaurants and Bars](#). These considerations are meant to supplement—**not replace**—any local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal safety laws, rules, or regulations with which businesses must comply.

Guiding Principles to Keep in Mind

The more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread. The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in a casino or gaming setting as follows:

Lowest Risk	More Risk	Even More Risk	Highest Risk
Gaming activities are only available in virtual or online format.	Casinos are open but with limitations to allow social distancing and disinfection of machines between uses.	Casinos are open but with limitations to allow social distancing. Games that require a dealer and that allow multiple players	Casino and gaming operations are open at full capacity. Games that require a dealer and that allow

Activities are limited to gaming machines and equipment that do not require a dealer and that can be played by one customer at a time and disinfected between uses.

Individuals remain spaced at least 6 feet apart (2 arms' length) while seated or standing.

Sharing of gaming materials and equipment is not allowed.

at the same time are offered, but the number of players is limited.

Individuals remain spaced at least 6 feet apart while seated or standing.

When possible, casino limits customers' sharing of objects such as dice, card shoes, shufflers, and roulette wheels, Pai Gow tiles, pit podiums, blackjack discard holders, and token boxes. Casino cleans and disinfects these objects between uses as much as possible.

When possible, casino limits sharing of items that are difficult to clean and disinfect, such as cards, and holds items for 72 hours before reuse of these items.

multiple players at the same time are offered.

Individuals are not spaced apart while seated or standing.

Sharing of gaming materials and equipment is permitted with no restrictions.

Know How the Virus Spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Infected people can spread the virus whether or not they have

symptoms. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as [handwashing](#), [staying home when sick](#)) and environmental [cleaning and disinfection](#) are important principles that are covered in this document.

Fortunately, there are a number of actions operators of casinos and gaming operations can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Casinos and gaming operations may consider implementing strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 among staff and customers.

- **Staying Home when Appropriate**

- Educate staff and customers about when they should [stay home](#).
 - Actively encourage staff and customers to [stay home](#) if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 or have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Encourage staff and customers who have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days to [stay home and monitor their health](#).
 - Consult [CDC criteria](#) to inform policies on when staff can return to work and when customers can return to the casino if they had symptoms of COVID-19, tested positive for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Develop [policies](#) that encourage sick staff to stay at home without fear of being punished or losing their jobs, and ensure staff are aware of these policies. Educate staff when they can [return to work](#).

- **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

- Recommend and reinforce frequent staff and customer hand hygiene behaviors (e.g., before, during, and after touching gaming tokens, cards, and other frequently touched surfaces). Encourage [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Remind staff and customers to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Encourage staff and customers to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or to use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- **Masks**

- Recommend and reinforce the use of [masks](#) among staff and customers. Masks should be worn as feasible and are **most** essential in times when social distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the mask and to wash their hands frequently. Provide information to staff and customers on [proper use, removal, and washing of masks](#).
 - Note: [Masks](#) 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 mask

without assistance

- [Masks](#) are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected and does not have symptoms.
- **Adequate Supplies**
 - Ensure you have accessible sinks and enough supplies for people to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes. Supplies include soap and water, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered), masks (as feasible), and hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (placed adjacent to every card table or table game, if supplies allow).
- **Signs and Messages**
 - Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances, in restrooms, on televisions) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs, such as by [properly washing hands](#) and properly wearing a mask. Provide signs and messages in multiple languages.
 - Broadcast regular [announcements](#) about reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA systems. Include messages (for example, [videos](#)) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and customers (such as on business websites, in emails, and on [social media](#)). Ensure messages are [culturally appropriate](#).
 - Find free CDC print and digital resources in a variety of languages on CDC's [communications resources main page](#).

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Casinos and gaming operations may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

- **Cleaning and Disinfection**
 - [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces (e.g., ATMs, door handles, cash registers, workstations, sink handles, bathroom stalls, table rails, chairs, buttons or touch points on gaming machines) within facilities at least daily and between uses as much as possible. Use disinfectants from [EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#) [↗](#).
 - Limit customers' sharing of objects (e.g., items used in table games, dice, card shoes, shufflers, roulette wheels, Pai Gow tiles, pit podiums, blackjack discard holders, token boxes) when possible, and clean and disinfect these objects between uses as much as possible.
 - [Clean and disinfect](#) electronic gaming machines (e.g., slots, touch screen games) at least daily and between uses as much as possible.
 - Consider placing wipeable covers over electronics.
 - Follow the [equipment manufacturer's instructions](#) for appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures for machines and associated electronics.
 - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect machine buttons and touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
 - Designate staff to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces for table games, gaming machines, and equipment.
 - Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children. Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. [Wash hands](#) after removing gloves.
 - Ensure there is adequate ventilation when using cleaning products to prevent customers or staff from inhaling toxic fumes.
- **Shared Objects**
 - Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
 - When possible, dealers should instruct customers not to touch cards or deal cards face up.
 - For items that are not easily cleaned and disinfected (e.g., cards), place in a designated separate area for at least 72 hours before using these items again.
 - Avoid sharing gaming items that are reusable, such as cards, dice, or gaming pieces. [Clean and disinfect](#) or replace items after a staff member or new customer comes into contact with them.
 - Ensure staff have adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch gaming equipment.
 - Account for the frequent replacement of shared objects (e.g., dice, cards, chips) during table games to ensure there are enough gaming supplies.
 - Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available. Ask customers to exchange cash or card payments by placing payment on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand to hand contact. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use.
 - Use disposable drink service items (e.g., utensils, cups, napkins). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water, or in a dishwasher. Staff should [wash their hands](#) after removing their gloves or after handling used drink service items.
 - **Ventilation**
 - Consider taking steps to improve ventilation in the building, in consultation with a HVAC professional, to increase total airflow supply occupied spaces, if possible.
 - Consider increasing the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 - Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors and prioritizing outdoor seating.
 - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to customers or staff (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).
 - **Water Systems**
 - To minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with

water, [take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, decorative fountains, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

- Drinking fountains should be cleaned and disinfected frequently or closed if this is not possible.

- **Modified Layouts and Procedures**

- Change gaming layouts to ensure that staff and customers remain at least 6 feet apart, when feasible.
- Limit seating capacity to allow for [social distancing](#). Limit the number of customers at gaming tables based on type of game to maintain at least 6 feet between customers.
 - Limit seating by removing chairs to visually enforce maximum capacity at table games.
 - Provide visual cues on the floor for where chairs should be placed to ensure 6 feet of distance between customers and the dealer.
- Discourage eating at game tables.
- Discourage customers from congregating around gaming and food service areas.

- **Physical Barriers and Guides**

- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., cash registers, gaming machines, between dealer and customer).
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signage, to encourage individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., at gaming tables, entrances, in purchase lines).

- **Communal Spaces**

- Close shared spaces such as staff break rooms, if possible; otherwise stagger their use and restrict the number of people allowed in at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart, and [clean and disinfect](#) between staff.
- Provide outdoor options for staff areas and meetings.
- Provide hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol at designated eating staff areas.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Casinos and gaming operations may consider implementing strategies to maintain healthy operations.

- **Protections for Staff at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19**

- Offer options for staff at [higher risk for severe illness](#) (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions) that limit their risk of exposure (e.g., telework and modified job responsibilities).
- Consistent with applicable local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, put in place policies to protect the privacy of people at [higher risk for severe illness](#).

- **Regulatory Awareness**

- Be aware of local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal policies and recommendations related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.
- **Gatherings**
 - Avoid scheduling group events (e.g., large concerts, shows), gatherings, or meetings where social distancing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained.
- **Staggered or Rotated Shifts**
 - Stagger or rotate shifts to limit the number of staff on the floor at the same time.
 - Stagger and limit playing times to minimize the number of customers in the establishment.
- **Travel and Transit**
 - Encourage staff who use mass transit to consider using other [transportation options](#) (e.g., walking or biking, driving or riding by car alone or with household members only), if feasible.
 - Encourage staff who use public transportation or ride sharing to follow CDC guidance on how to [protect yourself when using transportation](#). Additionally, encourage staff to commute during less busy times and [clean their hands](#) as soon as possible after their trip.
- **Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**
 - Designate a staff member for each shift to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- **Communication Systems**
 - Consistent with applicable local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, put systems in place for:
 - Having staff and customers report to the establishment's point of contact if they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or were [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
 - Notifying [local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal health authorities](#) of COVID-19 cases.
 - Notifying staff, customers, and the public of business closures, and restrictions in place to limit COVID-19 exposure (e.g., limited hours of operation).
- **Telework and Virtual Meetings**
 - Encourage telework for as many staff as possible (e.g., accountants, engineers), especially staff at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
 - Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls when possible.
- **Leave (Time Off) Policies**
 - Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that enable staff to [stay home or self-isolate](#) when they have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, have recently have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days, or have to [care for someone who is sick](#).
 - Examine and revise policies for leave, telework, and staff compensation.
 - Leave policies should be flexible and not punish people for taking time off and should allow sick staff to stay home and away from co-workers. Leave

policies should also account for staff who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures.

- Develop policies for return-to-work after COVID-19 illness. CDC's [criteria to end home isolation](#) can inform these policies.
- **Back-Up Staffing Plan**
 - Monitor absenteeism of staff, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
- **Staff Training**
 - Train all staff in COVID safety protocols.
 - Conduct training virtually, or ensure that [social distancing](#) is maintained during training.
- **Recognize Signs and Symptoms**
 - If feasible, conduct daily health checks or ask staff and customers to conduct self-checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or [symptom checking](#)). Consider using examples of screening methods in CDC's [General Business FAQs](#) as a guide.
 - Health checks should be done for staff and customers safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable federal or state privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
- **Support Coping and Resilience**
 - Encourage staff to eat a healthy diet, exercise, get adequate sleep, and find time to unwind.
 - Encourage staff to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
 - Consider posting signs for the national distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Casinos and gaming operations may consider implementing strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

- **Advise Sick Staff of Home Isolation Criteria**
 - Sick staff should not return to work or end isolation until they have met CDC's [criteria to end home isolation](#).
- **Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick**
 - Make sure that staff know they should not come to work and should notify their manager or other designated COVID-19 point of contact if they have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
 - Identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Immediately separate staff or customers with [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself](#).
 - Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or

to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance, alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

- **Clean and Disinfect**

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#)
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Use disinfectants from [EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#) [↗](#) .
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#) [↗](#) , including storing them securely away from children.

- **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal laws, casino and gaming operators should notify [local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal health officials](#), staff, and customers immediately of any person who has COVID-19 at the establishment while maintaining that person's confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) [↗](#) and other local, state, territorial, federal, or tribal privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
- Inform those who have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

Last Updated Oct. 29, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)