

COVID-19 Reopening Gaming Operations Specific Considerations

Prior to Resuming Operations:

1. Identify gating criteria and establish metrics and benchmarks to determine when and how to expand functions and adjust restrictions and mitigation measures
2. Make sure employee health policies are in place, updated, communicated to employees, and easily understood. Consider employee temperature screening if necessary.
3. Evaluate your operating procedures for sanitizing and disinfecting. The frequency of cleaning and sanitizing should be increased when operational in all employee and public areas with an emphasis on high traffic areas and frequent contact surfaces. Make sure workers have proper training, equipment, and access to products according to EPA's registry of disinfectants.
 - Cleaning agents should be reviewed to ensure they meet EPA guidelines, are approved for use and are effective against COVID-19 and other viruses.
4. All employees should receive training on COVID-19 safety and sanitation protocols. More comprehensive training may be necessary for Housekeeping, Cleaners, Food & Beverage and Security.
5. Conduct environmental health and safety inspection and related maintenance activities. This is especially important for buildings that were closed and have been unoccupied. This may include inspecting the HVAC system and replacing filters, discarding any expired products (food, cleaning products, etc.), inspecting the fire and CO systems, identifying any leaks or mold growth, inspecting for presence of pests including rodents, etc. Also treat the water system and/or flush water lines by opening faucets and allowing water to run free for several minutes as stagnant water in pipes can lead to water quality issues. Pour water down any floor drains to keep sewage gas from coming into facility.
6. Develop a comprehensive COVID-19 prevention plan and specific procedures that identify and incorporate the needs of the facility. Consider the items listed in the following section when developing plans and procedures.
7. Reconfigure floor layout to facilitate physical distancing. This may include relocating tables, shutting down every other machine, moving chairs, etc.
8. Where practical, install Plexiglas partitions between static places that patrons walk up to interface with employees. Plexiglas shields may also be installed between gaming machines if physical distancing (turning off every other machine) is not realistic or possible
9. Develop a routine evaluation and monitoring schedule to assess progress and address any concerns or challenges
10. Determine patron health screening procedures. Some facilities are using exterior thermal cameras and confirmatory forehead (no touch) thermometers, as well as asking guests and employees about COVID-19 symptoms.
11. Reconfigure smoking areas to ensure and enforce physical distancing. Consider using floor markings or signs. Some facilities have a security person monitoring this area to enforce compliance with physical distancing.
12. Determine a protocol for responding to staff or customer with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection. Be as detailed as possible.

Considerations once Gaming Operations have Resumed:

1. Masks, face shields, and gloves for certain employees; for instance, game table dealers or serving staff. Ensure PPE is readily available in an accessible location for employees.
2. Encourage or require patrons to wear masks and gloves.

3. Implement health screening procedures for all guests and employees upon facility arrival. This might include taking temperatures as well as asking guests and employees about COVID-19 symptoms.
4. Isolate symptomatic and confirmed COVID-19 employees and patrons from premises for 14 days, or until they provide a negative test result.
5. Post signs reminding guests to practice physical distancing and frequent hand washing and on wearing face masks properly. Also post signs near staff and patron entrances to discourage sick customers from entering the premises.
6. Use communication boards or digital messaging to convey pre-shift information (like specials or changes to procedures)
7. Limit the number of doors in use. Consider managing the flow of patrons and reduce congestion by designating some doors for entry and exit only.
8. Valet services should be closed.
9. Concerts, dances, drawings, and other promotional events should be cancelled.
10. Meetings, conferences and use of event space should be suspended.
11. As warranted, limit number of patrons in facility and consider limiting the length of time each patron may spend inside the facility.
12. Increase the frequency of air filter replacement and HVAC system cleaning, use at least MERV-13 filters, and maximize fresh air exchange
13. Discourage guests from standing behind other guests at a machine or table unless the guests are with one another. Consider the use of floor markings or other barriers
14. Consider staggering shifts for staff. Workstations should be staggered so that employees are not standing directly opposite or adjacent to one another.
15. Limit the number of employees allowed in break rooms
16. Provide hand sanitizer stations and sanitizer wipes for guest use to clean machines and frequent touch areas
17. Frequent and consistent sanitizing for high traffic touch areas and equipment. Wipe machines, doors, counters, key pads, and other common areas frequently as appropriate. Some facilities have added technology to their machines that notifies staff when a guest leaves a machine allowing for immediate and diligent cleaning and sanitization between players.
18. Use distance markers for F&B outlets and other high traffic areas
19. On-site shops should enforce social distancing by limiting the number of patrons allowed at one time
20. Discontinue buffets, salad bars, and beverage stations. Have staff refill/provide beverages
21. Temporarily suspend drink service on the floor. Staff should wear face coverings if continuing service and diligently pick up used glasses or provide extra garbage areas for disposal.
22. Consider making accommodations for high-risk staff or those with who live with high-risk persons, like offering N95 masks or face shields or if possible offering work off the floor to minimize contacts with people
23. Enforce, as necessary, health and safety policy violations

See our Food Service Guidelines for specific measures and recommendations related to food and beverage operations.

References and Resource:

- Johns Hopkins University, Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19, https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/reopening-guidance-governors.pdf
- CDC, Reopening Cleaning and Disinfecting, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- ASHRAE, Position Document on Infectious Aerosols, https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/about/position%20documents/pd_infectiousaerosols_2020.pdf
- Nevada Gaming Control Board. (2020). “Health and Safety Policies for Resumption of Gaming Operations for Non-restricted Licensees.” <https://gaming.nv.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=16731>

Much of this guidance was developed through conversations with and reviewing several Northwest Tribes plans for reopening.