



# CORONAVIRUS

## A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

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# Prevent Crisis: Action to Take Now

The success of your response to coronavirus will depend at least in part on your employee relations and how well that part of your operation functions daily. As you consider the rest of this document, keep in mind that one of the most important parts of crisis management is effective communication. In the coming days and weeks, you may change some of your company's policies and procedures, whether it's the way you schedule your employees or the way you serve your customers, or the way you communicate with the rest of your community. As you consider whether anything needs to change, consider engaging your employees and business partners first.

## Making a Change, Communicating a Change

- Whether you're making a change to your hours of operation, your cleaning procedures, or the way you deal with potential shortages of supplies, communicate with your team members early. They'll be able to tell you whether they see obstacles ahead. And, they'll be able to advise you on the right time to roll out a change.
- Sit down with your team members and level with them about what coronavirus is and why it needs to be taken seriously. Don't let them walk away from the conversation with misconceptions. It's up to them to work to stay safe and help keep customers safe, so they need to be invested.
- If you feel that there are many unknowns ahead and you think your employees sense the uncertainty, you can communicate that while also being a strong leader.
  - For example, you can let employees know that while you may not be able to predict all the changes you're about to see in the community, when something changes, you'll talk about it as a team.
  - Some employees may be dealing with challenges of their own, like a child at home without childcare because schools have closed. Outside of possible schedule changes, you may be limited in the ways you're able to help. Still, keeping these challenges in mind will help you approach your team members in a way that shows an understanding for the many impacts that they are feeling.
  - As you think about communications, save your employees' phone numbers to your mobile phone, or otherwise make sure you can

communicate with workers without having to head to your restaurant or office. With daily changes in the reality of coronavirus, you may need to communicate quickly to your team.

- There is much more detailed information for employers contending with legal questions around the coronavirus as well as advice for creating disaster preparedness plans on the [CRA's website, here](#). You can also [refer to this FAQ, written by one of CRA's trusted legal partners, here](#). We believe this document will answer many of your ongoing questions.

# Sick Days for Employees

Public health officials have said that one of the most important ways of preventing further spread of coronavirus is to make absolutely certain that sick employees stay away from the workplace. This is a very important preventative measure. If a customer (or other workers) get sick down the road and you're asked, "What do you do to keep this restaurant free of the virus," one thing you want to be able to say is, "I do not allow people to work when they're sick. If someone is feeling sick, they are required to go home."

There are benefits available to your employees that they should be aware of, and resources available to you as an employer.

## Paid Sick Leave and Other Benefits

- Remind employees that under California law, they are entitled to a minimum of three paid sick days. We know that some of you try to provide more than that and that some California cities require employers to provide more than this amount. If you're not sure of the requirements in your area, you can check with your county's public health department or contact the CRA at [helpline@calrest.org](mailto:helpline@calrest.org) or 1-800-765-4842, ext. 2743. We'll get you the information you need to help you keep your workers healthy.
- Those who've been exposed to coronavirus or tested positive for coronavirus are entitled to more long-term benefits. They may qualify for extended paid leave, thanks to California's Disability Insurance (DI) program. More information is available by [clicking here](#). And, those who are caring for a sick loved one can qualify for family leave, or FMLA. More information about that is [available here](#).
- If your business is struggling and you're worried that you may have to lay off your employees, you might benefit from California's UI Work Sharing Program. It allows you to reduce your employees' hours but keep them on the job. The state will cover a portion of the cost of their lost hours. For many business owners, this option will not only help them help their employees but will make a difference in keeping the businesses open. More information [is available here](#).

- There are additional, more comprehensive resources for business owners, available by [clicking here](#).

## Keeping a Clean Restaurant

Restaurants already require frequent hand washing and each employee is mandated to be certified as a Responsible Food Handler. This was true before coronavirus and it will be true after. Still, it might help to review [this sheet of tips from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#). What's shared here will hold true no matter what part of the state you're in.

- Assign an employee to this important task of managing all the actions you're taking to keep your restaurant continuously clean.
- Be sure your employees are invested in helping keep a clean workplace. Ideally, your entire team should be on board with these practices and enthusiastic about them. Not only does that help get the job done, but if a problem were to arise, like a complaint from a customer or a new case of illness that is in some way linked to your restaurant, you want to be sure your employees are supportive of everything you've done.
- Other helpful resources include this [ServSafe one-sheet](#), also available in Spanish. Even more robust resources, including printable posters are [available here, from the National Restaurant Association](#).

# Communicating During Crisis

## Communicating With Customers, the Community

- Have a list printed and set aside of all the things that you do every day, from your key employment policies to your food safety and cleaning practices. If a customer ever expresses a concern or has a complaint, this will save you time and help reduce stress. You can refer to your list and let them know how robust and thorough you are in caring for your employees' and customers' safety.
- Let customers see what you do. You're already working hard every day to prevent the spread of illness. Maybe a customer wouldn't mind if they saw an employee wiping down menus or spraying down a countertop. Other visual representations of the care you take:
  - Setting out boxes of tissues throughout the restaurant in case a customer coughs or sneezes
  - Having extra napkins on countertops, at work stations, and on tables in the dining room
  - Having prominent signs in the restrooms about hand washing
  - Having an employee wear gloves and help serve customers at the buffet rather than letting them serve themselves.
- Some restaurants have built a strong communications pathway to their customers through email marketing programs. If business is down because of coronavirus fears, this platform may be a good place to reach out to customers. Here are excerpts from a reassuring email that Starbucks' CEO, Kevin Johnson, sent to customers Wednesday night:

*I wanted to personally reach out to you and provide an update on the actions that Starbucks is taking to help prevent the spread of the virus and support the health and well-being of our customers, our partners (employees) and our communities.*

*You may be aware that over the last few weeks we have taken a series of precautionary steps in response to this developing public health impact, including increased cleaning and sanitizing procedures for our stores. We have also prepared our stores to respond quickly to any emerging situation, leveraging the considerable insights we've gained from our experience in China, where we continue to see encouraging signs of recovery with over 90% of stores reopened.*

We appreciate your understanding that, as a customer, your Starbucks Experience may look different as we navigate through this time together. While we are currently maintaining regular operations across the U.S. and Canada, our stores are prepared to modify operations with options that still allow us to serve you your favorite beverage and food. This means that as we navigate this dynamic situation community-by-community and store-by-store, we may adapt the store experience by limiting seating to improve social distancing, enable mobile order-only scenarios for pickup via the Starbucks App or delivery via Uber Eats, or in some cases only the Drive Thru will be open. As a last resort, we will close a store if we feel it is in the best interest of our customers and partners, or if we are directed to do so by government authorities. In any such situation, we expect store disruption to be temporary.

I want to also thank you for supporting our Starbucks partners who proudly wear the green apron. We have a long-standing history of caring for our partners, recognizing they are the heartbeat of Starbucks. That is why, as we navigate this dynamic situation, in addition to our sick leave benefit and mental health offerings, we are also expanding catastrophe pay so that partners do not need to feel like they need to choose between their health and their work.

- Maintain a relationship with your customers through social media. This, by itself, won't bring all your customers back and it may not be the best place to discuss a virus. However, continuing to post, for example, about discounted menu items, or the good causes you participate in as a business, will remind customers that you're still here, still open for business, and doing good things.
- Think of becoming part of the ongoing coronavirus story in a positive way. Restaurants help communities through food donations during all kinds of natural disasters. In your community, is there an opportunity to do outreach to the medical community — whether through a special meal you have delivered to them or a menu item you dedicate in some way to them? It will bring you positive attention and remind consumers that by supporting your business, they're supporting the community.

- Connect with your fellow restaurateurs and exchange ideas about ways to either increase business – or, at least, keep your business afloat – until we get past this crisis. If you're in an area that has a downtown association, they may have ideas that will be effective in your area. Some ideas we came across this week:
  - Rather than promoting dine-in experiences right now, promote gift cards – especially to your regular customers who will be back once they feel safer about going out. That revenue could help your business survive temporarily while ensuring that once your customers are ready to go out again, it's you they'll come back to.
  - If you have an in-house delivery service or a drive-through, consider shifting your marketing budget to promote these dining options for now.
  - If dine-in sales plummet and you find that you have too many servers without much to do, how would the servers feel about delivering meals instead?

## Communicating During Crisis

### Talking to the Community Through the Media

Some of you may be approached by local news reporters interested in how restaurants are being impacted by the coronavirus.

- It's your choice whether or not to take part.
- If you choose not to take part, be sure you let reporters know that even though this isn't the best time for you, you might reach out to them in the future when you do have something to say. This will help you maintain positive media relations. You or other neighborhood businesses may decide to reach out to local news media once the community starts to recover from the effects of coronavirus and you're making a push to get the public going out again.
- If the story is about a case of coronavirus linked to your restaurant, you will feel compelled to respond and you may find that the responsible thing to do is to address the community. If that happens, contact the CRA's Vice President of Public Affairs, Sharokina Shams, at [sshams@calrest.org](mailto:sshams@calrest.org). Sharokina is a former print and television news reporter who can help you be responsive to journalists while also protecting your business.



*This document will be continuously updated as information develops and resources available to businesses grow.*