Face Coverings in Retail Food & Food Production Settings

(Recommendation – NOT Mandated as of this writing)

- On April 3, the CDC announced their recommendation for the use of a simple cloth face covering as a voluntary public health measure in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. This is not a mandate; this is a recommendation.

- Consider the following if you choose to use a cloth face covering to slow the spread of COVID-19:
  - Maintain face coverings in accordance with parameters in FDA’s Model Food Code sections 4-801.11 Clean Linens and 4.802.11 Specifications.
  - Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use.
  - CDC also has additional information on the use of face coverings, including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.
  - There are many videos available online that shows you how to make a mask with a bandana and rubberbands.

Unemployment Insurance:

Some questions that have come up

- Why are my employees being told they need to apply for jobs while on UI?

- To ensure the applicant is receiving the COVID UI package (meaning no need to do job searches and fast track their claim), at the beginning of the UI application process the applicant must click that they’re applying because of the COVID-19 crisis. Per the UI website, “...claimants do not need to do a work search during the Governor’s declared emergency. The Department is in the process of making the necessary updates. No action is needed on the part of the claimant regarding the work search.” If employees don’t click that, they will be taken down a different path that won’t extend these new benefits to them.

- If your employee is being told that the system can’t find their employer, here are a few things to look into:
  - Look at your quarterly UI statement. How is your company name referenced on that statement? That’s the exact company name that the employee should use when filing. Share that business name with your employees to make it an easier process for them.
  - Have you been using the correct social security number for the employee when making your quarterly payments into UI?

- Can I as the owner apply for UI?
  - Maybe. We encourage everyone to apply. Some owners have received it; others aren’t approved. You may have a better chance of receiving if:
    - You currently pay into UI for yourself
    - Have yourself on “payroll”
Which Relief Package is Right For You

(WRA is not a financial advisor so we do encourage you to consult with your banker.)

The two big relief packages that you’re probably hearing the most about are ones through the Small Business Administration (SBA):

- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs)
  Summary: [www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/resource_files/EIDL-BDO_Presentation_March_26_0.pdf](www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/resource_files/EIDL-BDO_Presentation_March_26_0.pdf)

- Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) through the CARES Act
  Summary: [restaurant.org/Covid19_CARES-Act](restaurant.org/Covid19_CARES-Act)

There’s no single answer as to which is the best one; this is strictly based on your own situation. You should look into all options. Even start applying for the help. Just don’t close on any loans until you know that you’ve selected the one that’s best for your needs.

Things to Know About This Relief

- For the Paycheck Protection Program you will need to use a bank that’s an approved Small Business Administration (SBA) lender. Visit this site to find SBA lenders - [www.wisbank.com/articles/2020/03/wisconsin-sba-lenders](www.wisbank.com/articles/2020/03/wisconsin-sba-lenders)

- For the Economic Injury Disaster Loan you will need to apply on line at [disasterloan.sba.gov/ela](disasterloan.sba.gov/ela)

- The PPP loan provides payroll forgiveness. Meaning you do not need to pay the dollars back that were used to pay wages to your staff.

- You have to have 500 or fewer employees per location

- The forgiveness is an eight-week period that you choose between February 15 – June 30, 2020

- The PPP through the CARES Act expressly excludes qualified sick and family leave wages for which a credit is allowed under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

- Please be aware that there’s many options out there. Check with your local banker and ask the questions upfront to know what’s best for you.
Get Creative

SOCIAL DISTANCING CREATES A GREATER NEED FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

There’s more of a need now than ever for connecting with people and businesses through social channels. If you’re still open for business, you MUST keep your customers up on how you’re adjusting to the new business norm. Keep it upbeat. Show happy faces of staff that are preparing their food… with proper social distancing of course! Post on different menu items, specials that you’re offering, staff that you’re happy to keep employed. Now more than ever people are community focused—they want to stay in touch and they want to support.

USE YOUR WINDOWS TO UPSELL

People are still driving by so use your windows to promote special offerings. Like special deals on bottles of wine, Bloody Mary kits, six packs of beer… or family meals.

It doesn’t have to be a fancy banner. In these times colorful pieces of paper with one letter per piece of paper works just fine.

TAKE THE DESIRE FOR EXPERENTIAL DINING TO THEIR HOME

If you are known for your pizza, post a video to your social channels of your chef creating a tasty ‘za. This could create some cravings for take out. Remember to do a quick edit to keep the video short. You can even offer pizza kits that they can create and bake at home for family fun. Remember to follow proper food labeling requirements.

Speaking of “kits”, there’s a lot of creative options to help you increase your revenue beyond what might be your typical take out or delivery order. People still want their specialty drinks or tasty, warm bread that they might enjoy when dining in. Think about offering:

• Old Fashioned kits—you can do this by offering unopened bottles of spirits, cans of soda, and all of the “fixings” packaged separately
• Bread dough in a tin container with egg wash to brush on the top and bake
• All of the fixings along with recipes to help make a gourmet breakfast for four
• Uncooked steaks, seasonings, salad and potatoes to grill at home
• Make sure you follow labeling requirement for all “at home” kits—go to the [WRA website](https://wirestaurant.org) for more info

Go to the WRA website for more info—wirestaurant.org
ADD CONVENIENCE – OFFER GROCERY ITEMS

At a time when people are restricted, make it easy for your customers to add on un-traditional restaurant items. Your retail food license allows you to sell food items as a grocery store would. Some things to think about:

- Toilet paper
- Sanitizer
- Milk
- Eggs
- Bread
- Steaks

HOLIDAYS AND FAMILY MEALS

A lot of people that used to eat out during the holidays will most likely still want to enjoy a meal from a restaurant. Things to think about for upcoming holidays:

- Ask that people pre-order their holiday meals and make sure to get payment with the pre-order. Set a deadline that coincides with when you’ll have to place your food order
- Add some special menu choices like you most likely would if your dining room was open

With families spending more time together than ever before, many are going back to basics and making family meal time a priority. You should think about offering and promoting inclusive family meal options that can accommodate 4-6 people. Comfort foods like family servings of gourmet mac & cheese, pot roast, and other delicious options that travel and hold well.

THINK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE DINING ROOM BUSINESS NOW

Include a coupon with delivery and take out orders that can be used in the future for a dine-in visit only. You can put an expiration date of 30 days after the stay at home order is lifted.

Still have questions?
Have a specific situation not covered here?

Ask WRA at:

608-270-9950
askwra@wirestaurant.org

Visit the WRA website for more info at wirestaurant.org