



# CHECKLIST

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## REOPENING A FOOD BUSINESS DURING OR AFTER A PANDEMIC

After the shutdown of a food business due to a pandemic, it is important to be aware of the following considerations when reopening to ensure the continuous production of safe products and to protect employee health.

The following is a simple start-up checklist that could be used after a shutdown due to a pandemic.

	DATE COMPLETED	NOT APPLICABLE	INITIAL
<b>QUALITY AND FOOD SAFETY SYSTEM</b>			
If a new process step, procedure, flow or piece of equipment was introduced, the food safety program (PCP/HACCP plan) would need to be reassessed to determine any new risks.			
<b>FACILITY – EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR</b>			
The exterior of the facility is in good condition and repair, and there are no signs of damage, entry, leaks or pest activity. Ensure all debris (e.g. tall grass, snow, pallets, construction or maintenance tools, etc.) is cleaned up.			
The interior of the entire facility is in good condition and repair, and there are no signs of damage, entry, leaks or pest activity. Look for areas that require clean up before regular start-up sanitation.			
Lights are intact and provide adequate lighting.			
Glass and brittle plastic items are intact.			
Ventilation is functioning properly and adequate.			
Water, ice and air or other gases used as an ingredient or for cleaning and hygiene are safe for use.			
Site security systems are functioning.			
<b>FACILITY – FLOW OF EMPLOYEES</b>			
Have employees enter one door and exit through a different door and implement one direction in narrow hallways, stairs or aisles where possible to avoid face-to-face contact.			
Post signage to direct the flow of traffic.			
Have visual cues to outline 6' or 2m distance to be maintained by employees. This can include tape on floors or signs on walls.			
Remove or rearrange chairs to encourage physical distancing.			
Reduce the number of high-touch surfaces where possible (e.g. prop open doors, no-touch soap, sanitizer and paper towel dispensers and waste containers).			



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<b>CLEANING AND SANITATION</b>			
Reassess the sanitation schedule. Increase cleaning and sanitizing frequency on high-touch surfaces (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, railings, tables, countertops, desks, microwave and fridge handles, sink taps, keyboards and mouse, etc.) and common use areas such as breakrooms, washrooms, offices, etc.			
Ensure hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers are approved for use by Health Canada. (Covid-19: <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</a> ).			
Ensure cleaners are fresh and not expired.			
Ensure there is a sufficient stock of cleaning and disinfecting supplies.			
<b>EMPLOYEES – HEALTH SCREENING</b>			
Interview employees before returning to work and ask the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they experiencing any symptoms?</li> <li>• Have they been in close contact with someone who is a recently suspected or confirmed case?</li> <li>• Have they been out of the province within the last 14 days?</li> </ul> If the employee answers yes to any of the following, they must stay home and complete the 811 online self-assessment.			
If possible, consider checking the employees' temperature before they enter the facility.			
<b>TRAINING</b>			
Training should be done virtually to avoid multi-person meetings.			
Employees need to be aware of all Nova Scotia Public Health guidelines. This includes how the illness is transmitted, symptoms of the illness and when to self-isolate and call 811.			
Employees need to be aware of all control measures outlined by Nova Scotia Public Health officials, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining a 6' or 2m distance from other employees where possible and when not possible, wear a non-medical face mask or face shield</li> <li>• Wearing appropriate PPE such as non-medical face masks or face shields and gloves</li> <li>• When and how to properly wash hands</li> <li>• Sneezing and coughing etiquette (into elbow or tissue and wash hands after)</li> <li>• Avoiding touching their face</li> </ul>			
Have a procedure in place for employees to confidentially inform the employer that they are experiencing symptoms and a procedure to follow in the event an employee begins to feel sick at work or if an employee tests positive for the illness.			
If new processes or procedures have been implemented or if new equipment was installed, ensure that all employees are trained before starting up and that you have an SOP covering the specific changes such as Covid-19 protocols. Refresher training will be required for seasonal start-ups.			



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<b>HYGIENE</b>			
Where possible, have physical partitions (e.g. Plexiglass, curtains, etc.) to minimize employee contact.			
Ensure there is an adequate supply of PPE for all employees. Disposable options are the best. If using reusable options, ensure there are proper laundering procedures in place.			
Have an adequate number of hand wash stations and hand sanitizer stations and ensure they are adequately equipped with potable warm water, soap, hand sanitizer, single-use paper towels and garbage cans. Touch-free options are the best.			
Have hand sanitizer available at entrances for employees to use upon entry. Some food safety standards (e.g. Canada GAP) require a fully supplied handwashing station at each hand sanitizer site. Be aware of the requirements specific to the standard implemented at the facility.			
Ensure visual cues are outlining when and how to wash hands properly.			
<b>EMPLOYEE SHIFTS</b>			
Stagger start and end times to avoid the accumulation of employees in the parking lot, entrances, change rooms, etc.			
Stagger breaks to limit the number of people in common use areas and to ensure the ability to physically distance.			
Identify staff at higher risk. Have the same employees on the same shifts to reduce staff mixing and allow easier contact tracing.			
<b>USE OF COMMON AREAS / CARPOOLING</b>			
Do not share utensils/dishes, etc.			
Depending on provincial requirements, employees who carpool may have to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a non-medical face mask or face shield</li> <li>• Use hand hygiene before entering the vehicle and upon arrival at the destination</li> <li>• Disinfect the vehicle after each trip</li> </ul>			
<b>VISITORS</b>			
Limit the number of visitors coming into the facility to reduce risk. Aim for contactless delivery and pick-up.			
Post signage to control the number of visitors in the facility (e.g. direct visitors to call before entering and have visitors maintain a 6' or 2m distance from the receptionist desk, etc.)			



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<b>VISITORS – HEALTH SCREENING</b>			
Interview essential visitors/contractors before entering the facility and ask the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they experiencing any symptoms?</li> <li>• Have they been in close contact with someone who is a recently suspected or confirmed case?</li> <li>• Have they been out of the province within the last 14 days?</li> </ul> If the essential visitor/contractor answers yes to any of the following, they must stay home and complete the 811 online self-assessment.			
If possible, consider checking the essential visitor’s/contractor’s temperature before they enter the facility.			
<b>SUPPLIERS</b>			
Reassess all suppliers and service providers to ensure they are operating and are capable of meeting demands. This includes raw material, packaging, chemical, cleaning, pest control, transport and distribution, waste management, laboratories and laundry suppliers.			
If a change in suppliers is required, retrieve the product specifications and ensure the ingredient does not pose a new risk (e.g. allergen) or that the packaging or chemicals are appropriate for use and comparable to what was previously used.			
<b>STORAGE</b>			
Inspect all items (ingredients, finished product, packaging, chemicals) in storage areas for spoilage, damage, leaks, expiration, evidence of tampering or pest activity. Dispose of any items that do not meet the standard.			
Check storage temperature control records. Do not use or sell product if temperature logs indicate temperatures have exceeded control limits.			
Check that coolers and freezers are functioning and in good condition.			
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>			
Re-clean, re-sanitize and re-inspect equipment that has been shut down for a period of time before start-up.			
Electronic equipment such as computers, metal detectors or date coding systems may need to be rebooted, updated and recalibrated.			
If new equipment has been installed, ensure that the maintenance, calibration and sanitation programs are updated accordingly. Determine if any production SOPs need to be updated or written.			

**REFERENCES:**

- <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/occupational-health-and-safety/>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/resources/>
- <https://www.perennia.ca/quality-food-safety/covid-19/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/risk-informed-decision-making-workplaces-businesses-covid-19-pandemic.html>
- <https://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/workplace-guidance-for-sector-employers-and-employees/?id=1588862952557>

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-manufacturing-workers-employers.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Agricultural-Employer-checklist.pdf>
- <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/best-practices-re-opening-retail-food-establishments-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-checklist-for-food-businesses-during-covid-19>
- [https://www.unitedfresh.org/content/uploads/2020/06/Communal-Housing\\_Harvesting\\_Processing-Guidance\\_version-2.1-May\\_27\\_2020.doc.pdf](https://www.unitedfresh.org/content/uploads/2020/06/Communal-Housing_Harvesting_Processing-Guidance_version-2.1-May_27_2020.doc.pdf)