FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Ohio Restaurant Association Releases Unified Industry Voice
To Provide Clarity for COVID-19 Protocols

ORA releases comprehensive plan for pandemic related safety procedures

COLUMBUS, Ohio - The Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) is partnering with the Ohio Environmental Health Association, the Governor’s Restaurant Advisory Group, Cameron Mitchell Restaurants and The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center to provide best practices, guidelines and communications to the restaurant industry and key stakeholders regarding COVID-19 protocols through a Unified Industry Voice campaign.

The goal of the campaign is to provide clarity about the comprehensive steps the industry takes to provide a safe environment in Ohio restaurant and foodservice establishments for employees and guests. Documents published by the ORA and its partners in conjunction with the campaign will provide clarification for the industry and assist with employee and consumer confidence.

“We want to share the message that restaurants are safe places because the vast majority of owners and managers are doing what’s right and required through cleaning, sanitization, social distancing, following protocols in the Dine Safe Ohio order and working with health officials,” said ORA President and CEO John Barker. “Along with our Ohio Restaurant Promise, these best practices and guidelines will provide clarity and standardization among industry professionals and the public throughout Ohio.”

This Unified Industry Voice campaign will include and address the following:

- Common Questions and Answers Regarding COVID-19 – Helpful Tools for the Restaurant & Foodservice Industry
- What to Do When You Have an Employee Who Tests Positive
- Identification of Close Contacts
- Return to Work Flowchart for Direct/Indirect Contact with COVID-19
- Return to Work Flowchart for COVID-19 Test Results

The ORA’s campaign will include webinars with industry professionals and experts plus a news conference and ongoing communications with all industry stakeholders. The ORA will champion the industry, which generates 51% of all food dollars in Ohio and employs 585,000 people in the state.

“Restaurant owners and operators are focused on doing everything they can to survive the devastating impact of the pandemic,” said Barker. “They want to continue serving their guests with delicious food, drinks and genuine hospitality. By offering dine in, patio seating, carryout, drive-through, delivery and
catering, restaurants and foodservice operators provide solace for so many people during this stressful
time. They also keep our Ohio economy moving by directly supporting employees, distributors,
processors and farmers, plus paying rent, insurance, taxes and more.”

To view the documents of the Unified Industry Voice campaign, click here.

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**About Ohio Restaurant Association:**

For 100 years, the Ohio Restaurant Association (ORA) has proudly served Ohio’s restaurant and
foodservice industry, with their members always being their number one priority. Founded on thought
leadership and focused on finding sound business solutions for their members, the ORA offers advocacy
and education, events and programs. For more information, visit [ohiorestaurant.org](http://ohiorestaurant.org).

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COMMON QUESTIONS REGARDING COVID-19:
Helpful Tools for the Restaurant & Foodservice Industry

Ohio restaurants and foodservice facilities are the front line in feeding Ohioans. Since 2015, 51% of food sales safely flow through the restaurant industry annually. Our highly regulated industry makes every effort to keep guests and employees safe. To provide clarification and help operators with necessary decisions regarding COVID-19, the Ohio Restaurant Association, Ohio Environmental Health Association (Ohio’s Sanitarian community) and Franklin County Public Health have created this easy-to-use guideline to help restaurant operators keep their facilities, employees and guests safe.
WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHO TESTS POSITIVE:

CASE:

1. **Immediately send the sick employee home.** A person who has tested positive for COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions for **10 days after symptoms begin** and **until 24 hours after fever is gone without taking fever reducing medications and symptoms improve.**

2. The local health department will ask for the employee’s name and date of birth for verification of COVID-19 diagnosis.

3. The local health department will ask about the employee’s schedule before becoming symptomatic or being tested; specifically the last two days they worked prior to becoming ill or getting tested for COVID-19.

4. The local health department will ask about the employee’s symptoms onset date or specific symptom information if available.

IDENTIFICATION OF CLOSE CONTACTS:

1. Please compile a list of close contacts based on the guidance below. The local health department requests that you provide them with name and phone number at a minimum for all close contacts. If you are able to provide address information, that would be helpful as well. The local health department will be reaching out to identified close contacts to possibly place them under quarantine.

2. Any staff who **HAVE been in close contact** with the sick person **48 hours prior** to symptom onset or test collection date (if not having symptoms), should **NOT be at work for 14 days** after their last close contact and should quarantine themselves. They should watch for symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or a new loss of taste or smell. Close contact includes **being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 15 minutes or longer.**

3. If staff have **not been in close contact** with the sick person, and are not sick, they are considered to be at low risk for infection. They can continue to go to work but should monitor their health for 14 days and stay away from others if they get sick.

4. If staff **have symptoms** but **have not been exposed** to someone with COVID-19 and **have not tested positive** for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others and avoid public places until **24 hours** after the fever is gone without taking fever reducing medications and symptoms improve.

5. Currently there is no required testing for COVID-19 for close contacts. The decision to be tested is left to individuals and their physicians.

6. If a close contact tests negative prior to completion of 14-day quarantine, they are still required to complete their quarantine period and are not able to return to work just based on negative test results for COVID-19.

7. **CDC Considerations for Bars and Restaurants**

Updated July 21, 2020
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

What do the Ohio Public Health Advisory Color-Codes Mean, and What Action Must Be Taken by My Facility with Each Level?

The Ohio Public Health Advisory System is a color-coded system designed to supplement existing statewide orders through a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the virus’ spread, and to engage and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments and others in their response and actions.

Are there Best Practices from Local Health Departments to Help Keep Restaurant Facilities Open Throughout the COVID-19 crisis?

Restaurants and other foodservice businesses should require face coverings for employees and guests. Additionally, frequent cleaning and sanitizing of all high-touch surfaces should occur regularly. Restaurants, bars, and catering facilities should follow all guidance and requirements outlined in the Restart Ohio Restaurant/Bars documents, as well as in the Dine Safe Ohio Order.

Can I Tell Employees if a Co-worker has Tested Positive or has been in Close Contact with Someone Who has Tested Positive for COVID-19 or Other Communicable Diseases?

No. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) privacy rules restrict employers from sharing personal health information of an employee. Employers should inform employees that possible exposure has occurred in the workplace without disclosing any identifying information about the individual who tested positive.

Can I Ask an Employee if They have COVID-19?

Employers can ask an employee how he or she is feeling, in general, but should not inquire about a specific illness, as that could rise to the level of a disability-related inquiry under the ADA.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Do Face Coverings Matter?

Yes. Face coverings provide significant protection to others and some protection for yourself. With the goal of slowing the spread of COVID-19, the CDC recommends the use of face coverings for every person. Wearing a cloth face covering helps to protect people around you, including those at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and workers who frequently come in close contact with other people. The CDC says the spread of COVID-19 can be reduced when cloth face coverings are used along with other preventive measures, including social distancing, frequent handwashing, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

Your cloth face covering protects them. Their cloth face covering protects you.

Do I Need to Close My Restaurant If an Employee Tests Positive?

• There are currently no rules, laws or guidelines that require restaurants to close if they have a positive case within their establishment.
• There are many factors that go into the case and contact investigation process.
• All restaurants should follow best-practice cleaning guidance and ensure they are using an EPA approved cleaning product or solution.

The more staff that properly wear face coverings helps reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to other staff members. In a situation where all or most of the staff were considered close contacts, there is a high likelihood that all (or a significant portion of) staff members would have to be quarantined.

What Happens If A Close Contact Is Tested and Is Negative?

If a close contact tests negative prior to completion of 14-day quarantine, they are still required to complete their quarantine period and are not able to return to work just based on negative test results for COVID-19.

Do I Need to Inform My Staff About an Employee Testing Positive Who Has Been Working in My Facility Up Until the Positive Test?

Inform employees who were in close contact with the employee that you have reason to believe that they were in contact with someone who has since tested positive for COVID-19, without mentioning the affected employee’s name or any easily-identifiable information (such as their job title).

Should I Pre-emptively Shut My Restaurant if Someone in My Establishment Might Have Come in Contact with Someone Who Might Have Been Exposed to COVID-19?

No. You should work directly with your local health department. Additionally, you will need to immediately identify the close contacts of the positive case. However, there may be a situation where a large segment of staff may need to quarantine due to the exposure, which would make it difficult to adequately staff your establishment.

Updated July 21, 2020
RETURN TO WORK FLOWCHART:
DIRECT/INDIRECT CONTACT

I HAD CLOSE CONTACT* WITH SOMEONE WHO IS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 OR HAS MULTIPLE SYMPTOMS

STAY HOME FOR 14 DAYS SINCE LAST EXPOSURE & MONITOR FOR SYMPTOMS

CLEARED TO RETURN TO WORK BY MANAGER/HUMAN RESOURCES

DIRECT CONTACT AND INDIRECT CONTACT EXAMPLES:

DIRECT CONTACT: ROOMMATE HAS COVID-19

INDIRECT CONTACT: ROOMMATE'S BROTHER HAS COVID-19

QUARANTINE FOR 14 DAYS, MONITOR HEALTH FOR ANY SYMPTOMS.

RETURN TO WORK

RETURN TO WORK

*Close Contact: an individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset.

This includes individuals who previously tested positive for Covid-19 and have been re-exposed to the virus.
RETURN TO WORK FLOWCHART:
COVID-19 TESTING RESULTS

**POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST**
- I HAD SYMPTOMS
  - 10 DAYS (24 HOURS) NO FEVER & RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS HAVE IMPROVED
  - 10 DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE ONSET OF SYMPTOMS
  - CLEARED TO RETURN TO WORK BY MANAGER/HUMAN RESOURCES
- I DID NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS
  - 10 DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE TEST WAS ADMINISTERED
  - CLEARED TO RETURN TO WORK BY MANAGER/HUMAN RESOURCES

**NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST**
- I HAD SYMPTOMS
  - 10 DAYS (24 HOURS) NO SYMPTOMS AND/OR MEDICAL CLEARANCE TO WORK
  - CLEARED TO RETURN TO WORK BY MANAGER/HUMAN RESOURCES
- I DID NOT HAVE SYMPTOMS
  - RETURN TO WORK