

**Guidelines for Wine Tasting Room Operations**  
**In Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus**

**Wine Sub-Sector of the  
Restaurant Sector Subcommittee  
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**Oregon Winegrowers Association  
Oregon Wine Board  
Oregon Wine Council  
Columbia Gorge Winegrowers Association  
Rocks District Winegrowers  
Rogue Valley Vintners  
Southern Oregon Winegrowers Association  
Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association  
Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance  
Willamette Valley Wineries Association**

## Introduction

Beginning in February 2020 Governor Kate Brown began taking actions to mitigate the public health threat of the novel infectious coronavirus (COVID-19). She has issued Orders that prohibit large gatherings of people, constrain the operation of certain businesses, and require Oregonians to “Stay Home and Save Lives.” Those Orders have “flattened the curve” of COVID-19 infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths in Oregon. Once the incidence of the COVID-19 disease is manageable, business and social activities can be restored. However, increasing business and social activities creates a potential for infection rates to once again accelerate. Therefore, the Governor’s office is implementing a phased approach to Reopening Oregon. Each phase of reopening will require that public health **Gating Criteria** are met, and **Core Preparedness** of health systems and businesses are in place.

**Gating Criteria** include:

- 1) a downward trajectory of reported influenza and COVID-19 symptoms over a 14-day period,
- 2) a declining trajectory of documented cases of COVID-19, and positive tests as a percentage of total tests, over a 14-day period, and
- 3) the hospital capacity to treat all patients without crisis care, and the establishment of a robust testing program for at-risk health-care workers including emerging antibody testing.

**Core Preparedness** includes:

- 1) Capabilities for COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing,
- 2) Healthcare System Capacity - including adequate PPE & ICU resources, and
- 3) Plans to protect high risk individuals, employees, and customers including: methods for implementing social distancing protocols, and systems to monitor conditions and mitigate any rebounds or outbreaks.

One aspect of Core Preparedness is the ability for businesses to implement measures that minimize the spread of COVID-19. Generally, the environmental settings and service offerings for wine tasting rooms are different than those of restaurants. Thus, the Oregon wine industry is developing unique Guidelines for Wine Tasting Room Operations in Response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Those guidelines are based on OSHA’s [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#), the CDC’s [Personal Infection Prevention Measures](#), the Oregon Health Authority’s (OHA) [Cleaning Tips to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#), and the CDC’s guidance for [Managing Persons with Potential COVID-19](#). The following is an overview of certain guidelines for wine tasting rooms that are necessary to ensure healthful and sanitary operations for customers and employees. Periodic review of these measures will be performed to adapt them as the health risk from COVID-19 increases or decreases.

## Social Distancing Protocols

The following protocols are strongly encouraged:

- Individuals and “associated groups” will maintain a separation of at least 6’ as a matter of priority.
- Individuals in an “associated group” will be permitted to be in closer proximity than 6’. An **“associated group” will be individuals that have chosen to congregate together**. Associated groups will be required to maintain a 6’ distance from other individuals or groups. **Associated groups of more than ten (10) people will not be permitted.**
- Accommodations will be made for customers waiting for seating or service that allow for a 6’ distance between individuals or associated groups.
- Accommodations will be made for payments that allow for a 6’ distance between customers.
- Where possible, “bottlenecks” will be reduced to reduce proximity, e.g. bathrooms, reception areas, and wine bar – possibly place tape on the floor to indicate a 6’ separation.
- Where possible, prop open often used doors to increase air flow and limit touch points.

Further recommendations to limit personal interactions:

- If possible, utilize appointments for service to ensure social distancing will be maintained.
- Post maximum occupancy permitted inside the facility.
- Where possible, expand outside seating to limit indoor proximity.
- Encourage limitations on personal interaction, e.g. glass pours, bottle service, and pre-pours.
- Tastings of a “flight” of wine could be poured at one time rather than requiring repeated visits for each selection. Small groups could be offered a carafe of each selection.

## Personnel Illness Management Guidelines

The CDC provides guidelines for [Managing Persons with Potential COVID-19](#) infection. The following is an overview of key guidelines for tasting room employees that have potential exposure.

- Employees with symptoms of respiratory illness must stay home. This includes those with a fever (100.4° F or greater), or other symptoms like cough, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- The need for an employee to self-quarantine out of concern for potential COVID-19 infection should be addressed on a case-by-case basis based on the CDC guidelines reference above.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, or develops the symptoms of COVID-19, they must follow CDC guidelines for [Discontinuing Home Isolation](#).
- Employees will inform their supervisor regarding any exposure to persons with COVID-19 or exposure to any person that has symptoms of COVID-19, e.g. fever, cough, or sore throat.
- Employees must inform their supervisor immediately after becoming sick, even at home.

## Personal Infection Prevention Measures

CDC provides guidelines for [Protecting Yourself and Others](#). Tasting room specific guidelines include:

- Wash hands often or use a hand sanitizer with at least a 60% alcohol solution when hand washing is not available. This includes after handling any items used by customers, e.g. wine glasses, wine bottles, carafes, utensils, iPads, credit cards, money.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you frequently touch, e.g. counters, doorknobs, iPads.
- Wineries are encouraged to employ No Touch Payment options, e.g. Apple Pay and Google Pay.
- Use a dedicated iPad (or other POS) that you have sanitized and immediately sanitize the iPad and card-reader if a customer touches it. Offer to sign "X" on behalf of the customer to avoid contact.
- Consider wearing a face mask when in close contact with customers for an extended period of time.
- Consider wearing gloves during any key handoffs with customers.

## Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines

The ODA provides [Cleaning Tips to Help Prevent the Spread of COVID-19](#). The following are additional tasting room specific guidelines.

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched items in the workplace, such as iPads, keyboards, telephones, remote controls, kitchen surfaces, tables and chairs, desks, bathroom surfaces, doorknobs, work tools, equipment, and high contact surfaces.
- Clean and disinfect customer menus after each use, or consider using disposable menus.
- For disinfection, use EPA-registered disinfectants. Utilize disposable disinfecting wipes to clean frequently touched surfaces on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Avoid using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment when possible.
- Sanitize all wine and water glasses in a sanitizer (e.g. Hobart) after every use.
- Consider not polishing wine and water glasses to reduce potential contamination.
- Wash all dishes in a dishwasher (in sanitization mode) or with disinfectant.

## Organizational Considerations

- Designate an employee to establish, implement, and enforce social distancing protocols.
- Ensure availability of sanitizing gel, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and EPA-registered disinfectants.
- Post informational signage on social distancing (6' etc.), no admittance of individuals with flu-like symptoms (e.g. fever or cough), notice of risk, and encourage personal hygiene (e.g. wash hands).
- Develop a cleaning check list with timing required for various surfaces.
- Establish a process for confidential reporting personal illness and contact with COVID-19.
- Establish a system for confidential employee suggestions, especially during transition.
- Holding regular staff meetings to re-enforce and communicate personnel policies:
  - Social Distancing Protocols
  - Personnel Illness Guidelines
  - Personal Infection Prevention Measures
  - Cleaning and Sanitization Guidelines
  - A proactive sick leave policy