



ROSSLYN READY

Rosslyn Ready Restaurant Webinar Questions and Answers

The answers below were provided by industry experts from the Streetsense Eat + Drink Team during the June Rosslyn Ready Restaurant Webinar. The answers have been adapted from the webinar's transcript.

If you have a limited budget for updates, what are the necessary changes and updates you need to make?

The first thing to focus on is signage, which you should make easily visible to customers. Social distancing measures should be next. These include plexiglass partitioning for cashiers and hosts, or between tables to increase capacity. Ways to increase revenue so you can increase your budget for these updates (extended hours, for example) are also big things to consider.

Lastly, establish and enforce your policy. You want people to feel comfortable so you can ensure repeat customers. Not sending away someone who refuses to comply may mean more revenue for that evening but is more likely to harm your business in the long term, because the other guests may not feel comfortable coming back.

What if I don't have the capacity in my dining area to space customers 6ft apart?

You should consider other options for your business. Expanding your takeaway and delivery services are ways to do this. Converting a doorway into a pickup window or adding a pickup window is something that is being done successfully in many jurisdictions.

How many guests can we have inside and on the patio right now?

In Virginia, during Phase 1 of Virginia Forward, restaurants can operate with takeaway and delivery options. In addition, restaurants can serve guests outdoors, if they implement the mandatory requirements outlined in the governor's [Virginia Forward](#) plan.

When Northern Virginia enters into Phase 2 on June 12, restaurant and beverage establishments may offer indoor dining at 50 percent occupancy with at least six feet of spacing between tables, among other [strict requirements](#).

What's the best way to communicate in-house policies (like wearing a mask) to customers before they arrive?

Make the information available online. Since you are already required to have signage in the restaurant, an easy way to do this would be to take the image you printed your sign from, and have it placed on your website.

Another way might be to send out a newsletter to your mailing list explaining your new rules and guidelines.

What if a customer refuses to wear a face mask, when not eating and drinking, how do I tell my staff to handle a situation like this? Similarly, what if a customer refuses to follow the new safety guidelines that I have established? Can I refuse them service?

You can, and should, refuse people service if they are not following your policies or the safety guidelines established by the government. While it may hurt a little bit to lose that revenue in the short term, it's much better in the long term to make sure your other guests are not uncomfortable. If your guests don't feel safe, they're unlikely to come back, and that's where the big revenue hit will happen.

What if a customer is showing COVID symptoms? Am I allowed to deny them entry?

Yes, similar to how you can remove a customer for refusing to follow policies, you can remove or deny entry to a customer showing symptoms.

Can I do temperature checks on my employees before they come to work?

You can do temperature checks on your employees, and our toolkit recommends you do so daily. However, you need to also be aware that your employees are protected by confidentiality laws and you cannot inform the rest of the staff that an employee is sick without the sick person's permission.

Do you recommend or think it's necessary that the business provide surgical style masks versus employee provided cloth masks?

Yes, it is recommended, but not required that businesses provide surgical style masks to their employees. With how many different types and grades of masks are available right now, it is safer from both a safety and a liability standpoint for an employer to ensure all employees are using proper protection instead of providing their own that may not be fully safe.

How should restaurants and landlords restructure leases while reopening is occurring?

We see three options here. The first is rent abatement, which many landlords are willing to play ball with, as they are aware that many businesses are not making money right now. This is the ideal, but not all landlords are willing to provide this option.

Some will take a rent abatement and tack it on at the end of a lease as extra time. This is the second option.

Finally, the third option. Most landlords will likely accept a percentage of rent, based on how much the business is making. This should have a limit, so you don't end up paying more than what you should owe.

What's the most important thing I need to understand about capital management going into this crisis?

You need to figure out how much it costs you to run your business each day. Streetsense has made a capital management calculator to assist with these calculations.

What's happening in markets outside of the DMV?

Very different things are happening in different regions. Some areas are simply reopening with loose guidelines and it is causing chaos. These regions could be in serious danger, should there be another spike in COVID-19 infections.

Other areas, Hong Kong being a major example, are being much more careful, implementing slow growth openings, and it is going quite well for them.

What can we ask our jurisdictions to do?

One major thing you can ask your jurisdiction is to help with outdoor seating. This could include things like allocating parking areas for seating or giving space in a public park to restaurants.

You can also attempt to advocate for the removal of red tape around some of these applications to help expedite the process.