

COVID-19 Safety Tips

To-Go Practices at the Brewery

Version 1.1 Updated 5/4/2020

U.S. breweries are experiencing unprecedented challenges to meet consumer demand for craft beer while implementing social distancing standards and safe to-go operations. As breweries adjust to this new normal, they are also adapting how they manage the flow of sales and individual transactions to ensure the safety of their patrons and employees. Brewers Association committees, the Technical Brewing division, and various BA members offer the following advice to help breweries navigate practical issues related to serving beer responsibly while safeguarding their customers and employees.

I: Separate Customers from Employees

Keeping distance between your employees and customers is critical. A commonly employed method to maintain distance is drive-through pickup. Kyle Moore of MadTree Brewing prefers this model as it “allows customers to stay in their cars” instead of approaching staff or staff areas.

Alvin Mullins from 2C Family Brewing implemented curbside pickup with a streamlined ability to pre-order and pay. “We put up a web page with a link to a Google form to order for delivery or curbside. Our POS team posted an app so that people could order and pay from their phone. We also take phone orders.” Pre-orders and pre-payments are simple ways to reduce interaction time between brewery staff and customers.

Melissa Romano from Lake Anne Brew House took a different approach to social distancing between staff and customers by moving sales operations outside. “We have prohibited anyone except for staff from entering our taproom in an attempt to keep the interior safe and sanitary while we can beers on our makeshift ‘canning line.’”

Allagash Brewing carefully considered how to reduce interaction between customers and employees during delivery as well. “For home delivery, the customer shows our driver their ID through the driver’s car window and then returns to their house. Our driver then exits the car and leaves the beer on the customer’s doorstep.” – Jill Perry, Allagash Brewing Company

The Brewers Association Brewpubs Committee advises breweries to consider the following questions to limit interaction between brewery staff and customers:

- Can you implement non-contact delivery/pickup for those who request it (i.e., a place you can leave food and/or beer and customers can pick it up without FTF [face-to-face] contact)?

- Can you accommodate credit card payment over the phone or online to reduce or eliminate FTF interactions at a register? This can also minimize or eliminate time spent in proximity with others.

Jack Dyer of Topa Topa Brewing advises that there is no one-size-fits-all model for breweries or individual customers. Promoting a safe distance between staff and customers does not necessarily mean utilizing only one method. “Offer your customers options for pickup, local next-day delivery, or shipping direct. We’ve been amazed by the support on all these options so far.”

II: Separate Customers from Each Other

Enforcing social distance with your patrons might be challenging, but it is critical to maintaining safe operations. Staff must follow set SOPs, but customers may require additional guidance.

One perk of a drive-through or curbside model is that having customers remain in their vehicles automatically separates them from each other as well as staff. Allagash Brewing promotes social distancing by adhering to strict guidelines for its curbside model. “We place their order on the fence between our check out table and their car-- they only exit their vehicle to grab it.” – Jill Perry, Allagash Brewing Company

Moving operations to a large outdoor area helps the MadTree team safely accommodate walk-up orders. “Walk-up orders are done in our parking lot with plenty of room for people to spread out while waiting.” – Kyle Moore, MadTree Brewing

In addition to shifting to outside operations, Lake Ann Brew House clearly marked its queue to keep 6 feet of separation between customers. “We established a walk-up line marked for social distancing (see photo below) to keep our customers safe when they come to pick up their orders or place carryout orders.” – Melissa Romano, Lake Anne Brew House



III: Separate Employees from Each Other

Allagash is equally concerned about physical distancing between employees. “Our staff is positioned in individual zones while working. The zones do not overlap, and employees do not enter each other’s zones. There is only one person per shift on any device, which is sanitized before and after the shift. Every surface is sanitized multiple times daily. Frequent handwashing is required. If a staff member touches their hair or face, they must wash their hands. We have multiple new protocols in place for breakrooms and bathrooms as well.” – Jill Perry, Allagash Brewing Company

IV: Reduce Touch Points and Increase Sanitization

Breweries should limit the number of times goods and items are touched or handled. MadTree Brewing, for instance, is not taking cash and is trying to reduce the need to handle customer credit cards or shared items like pens. Lake Anne Brew House uses a similar model. “Our “server” is sanitizing everything (tabletop, touchscreen tablet for POS, etc.) between each

customer, and we are only accepting payments in advance online or by chip, tap, or contactless payment in person.” – Melissa Romano, Lake Anne Brew House

The Brewpubs Committee reminds breweries to regularly sanitize high-contact items like railings, door handles, ADA door assist buttons, check-signing pens, POS scanners, CC trays, money, faucets, food storage areas, light switches, coat hangers, phones, computers, POS screens, bar/kitchen utensils, ice scoops, glassware, rags, sanitizer bottles, and cleaning supplies.

Additional tips from the BA Brewpubs, Taprooms, and Technical Committees include:

- Frequently sanitize door handles. They can be easily forgotten and offer an easy way to transfer germs from hand to hand.
- Mandate that staff wash hands before and after engaging with a customer, especially when handling growlers or crowlers.
- Encourage and document staff training in proper handwashing/sanitizing processes. The Centers for Disease Control provides written resources [here](#) and video resources in English and Spanish [here](#).
- Gloves can still transmit germs. If employees are using gloves to handle items, remember that those are only keeping germs and contaminants from directly contacting their own skin. Wearing the same pair of gloves for an hour may still mean that food, packaging, etc. is being cross-contaminated.
- Inform your clientele of your thorough cleaning and sanitization practices. Make sanitation in your business visible and compliant to CDC/FDA regulations. Consider increasing handwashing stations and sanitizer dispensers in your business for both employees and customers. Make it easy, convenient, and visible!

V: Build New SOPs for Increased Social Distancing and Sanitization

The Brewers Association recommends written standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all brewery operations, including procedures for social distancing and increased sanitization.

Creating SOPs will increase the likelihood of all staff complying with set standards. For example, First Magnitude Brewing Company created SOPs for interactions with guests and growler filling.

Transactions with guests:

- Approach guests but maintain a 6-foot distance at all times.
- If growlers are being reused, safely obtain those from guests and start soaking them for 60 seconds in 200 ppm Quaternary Ammonia sanitizing solution.
 - Be sure to rinse the inside of the growler well to avoid decreased head retention.

- If cans are being sold, pull them from the cooler and wipe down with 70% isopropyl solution in view of guests before transfer.
- Place the point of sale on a surface and sanitize with isopropyl, then back away at least 6 feet.
- Request that the guest turn off and exit their vehicle to complete the transaction at the point of sale.
- Either allow the guests to pick up the cans at this time or load them into their trunk or backseat while remaining 6 feet away from the guest.
- Disinfect the point of sale once the guest has completed their transaction.

Growler filling:

- Either utilize a new sanitized growler, or once a reused growler has been sanitized, rinse it with water.
- Purge the bottle with CO₂. Sanitize the filling hose between use with isopropyl.
- Using gloves, place a sanitized fill tube into a faucet and begin filling the growler.
- Once it has been filled, rinsed, sealed, and labeled, sanitize the outside of the growler with isopropyl in view of guests before offering it back to them.

Make sure your SOPs align with your existing processes and available sanitizers. For example, BA technical staff suggests that alternatively you could:

- Use 200 ppm quaternary solution to sanitizer growlers and any pre-packaged to-go product. Be sure to use FDA-approved sanitizers for COVID-19 and related coronaviruses. Be aware of which chemicals are harmful to humans if accidentally consumed.
- Ask guests for their orders (online; as they walk up), fill them, run payment, then soak the packaged beer in a 5-gallon bucket of quaternary for the customer to pick up and take home. One solution might be a long line of numbered buckets, and the customer is told which number(s) has their order.
- Specify that employees should wear disposable gloves when accepting a returned growler or immediately wash their hands after putting the growler in sanitizer.

V: Stay Safe and Current

Always follow local and federal ordinances and all CDC recommendations. As the situation progresses, guidelines are likely to change. Check in regularly and remain compliant.

See the links below for additional resources, best practices, and recommendations.

- Use appropriate sanitizers: [Brewers Association Sanitizer Recommendations](#)
- Follow the [CDC's recommendations](#)
- Follow best practices for filling growlers: [Brewers Association Guide to Handling and Filling Beer Growlers](#)
- Refer to [ServSafe](#) for recommendations on food service and delivery. They are currently offering two educational modules free of charge.
- Review [CDC guidance for retail workers](#).