



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Puerto Rico Tourism Company Health and Safety Program

Last May 2020, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company first introduced the mandatory health and safety measures applicable to all travel and tourism businesses in Puerto Rico. The program’s objectives were to secure a gold standard in hygiene and sanitation while instilling measures to control the transmission and mitigate the impact of the threatening COVID-19.

Today (July 7, 2021), and after 18 months of the beginning of the health crisis, there is a great deal of new scientific data, medical treatments, and immunization advancements that have allowed the gradual resumption of business in a secured way. Due to the innovation and updated measures, the Health and Safety program for the travel and tourism industry was thoroughly revised.

The goal of the Health and Safety Program remains true: to become the gold standard in destination’s health and safety. As the COVID-19 will not dissipate, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company redesigned the program to secure the highest measures for safety across all the different sectors of the industry. The health, safety and well-being of our workforce, visitors, local patrons, and all we serve continues to be the top priority.

To secure the desired health environment, and in accordance with recommendations guidelines established by the [Puerto Rico Department of Health](#), the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), the [World Health Organization](#) and the [PROSHA](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the following mandatory guidelines were designed.

Term and Applicability

Starting July 7, 2021, and for the upcoming 12-months or until legal authorities declare the COVID-19 pandemic threat gone (whichever occurs first), all existing and new businesses in the travel and tourism sector must comply with these mandatory Health and Safety measures.

The applicable businesses required to follow through the implementation of these guidelines are:

Bed and Breakfasts (B&B)	Alternative Lodgings	Short-Term Rentals	Hostels
Glamping Facilities	Guest Houses	Tourism Villas	Condo-Hotels
Hotels	<i>Paradores and Posadas de Puerto Rico</i>		Casinos
Tour Operators	Certified Tour Guides	Travel Agencies	
Excursions Wholesalers	Restaurants, bars, and nightclubs within lodging properties		
Cultural Attractions			

The guidelines will be updated as needed based on the Governor’s Executive Orders, the Department of Health Administrative Orders, scientific research advances and new measures are published.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Updated Acknowledgement Form

All travel and tourism businesses must [acknowledge](#) the receipt and attest that they have read the updated guidelines and have applied the measures successfully in their businesses.

Regardless of having completed the previous acknowledgement form or having received the Health and Safety Certification, this updated acknowledgement form must be filled by all businesses before July 31, 2021.

Owners, general managers, directors of operations or the assigned Health and Safety Officer must sign the electronic acknowledgement form [HERE](#). Any business that does not comply with this requirement may be subject to penalties and sanctions imposed by the Health Departments.

Businesses who have received the Health and Safety Certification from the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, and do not complete the updated acknowledgement form, will be at risk of losing the certification.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Content

General Guidelines for All Travel and Tourism Businesses	4
Additional Measures Applicable to Lodging Businesses	8
Additional Measures Applicable to Restaurants and Bars Located within Lodging Properties	11
Additional Measures Applicable to Short-term Rentals	12
Measures Applicable to Casinos	14
Additional Measures Applicable to Transportation Providers	15
Additional Measures Applicable to Tour Operators and Attractions Managing Equipment	16



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

General Guidelines for All Travel and Tourism Businesses

1. **Vaccination** – The COVID-19 vaccination is an important tool to help stop the COVID-19 pandemic. As travel and tourism is a people driven industry, a line of business that is in close contact with other people including guests or coworkers, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company strongly suggests for the workforce to get immunized.

Although vaccination is not required for all employees, it is required that all business owners and managers support their staff to get the vaccine as a preventive measure. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect people from getting sick or severely ill and helps protect people around them.

2. **Capacity Restrictions:** business capacity limits will be established through either [Executive Orders](#) or the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#) that will be periodically published. These will be further clarified in the guidelines memorandum that the PRTC sends out to the industry stakeholders following the release of each [Executive Order](#) or [Administrative Order](#).

Capacity restriction posters: all businesses must install and clearly display the current capacity restriction posters throughout the different areas of the business. The official capacity limit poster from the Puerto Rico Health Department can be downloaded [HERE](#).

3. **Use of Mask and Face Coverings:** the guidelines for the mandatory use of face coverings for patrons and employees will be periodically reviewed, and will be established through either [Executive Orders](#) or the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#) that will be periodically published. These will be further clarified in the guidelines memorandum that the PRTC sends out to the industry stakeholders following the release of each [Executive Order](#) or [Administrative Order](#).

4. **Hand Sanitizing Stations** – All businesses must have hand sanitizer dispensers readily available for all customers. These must be strategically situated in common public areas including the entrance to the business, front desks, concierge stands, lobbies, elevator lobbies, and outside each bathroom location throughout the facilities.
 - a. The stations must be visible for all, and the use of it must be complimentary.
 - b. Must use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizing solutions.
 - c. When possible, it is recommended to provide contactless stations.

5. **Hand Washing.** All employees must wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or to use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Managers must inform employees that if their hands are visibly dirty, they should use soap and water instead of hand sanitizer. Per the CDC guidelines, the key times for employees to clean their hands include:

- Before and after work shifts
- Before and after work breaks
- After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- Before eating or preparing food
- After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

6. **Enhanced routine cleaning and disinfection.** Businesses are required to clean high touch surfaces and items at least once a day or as often as determined is necessary.

Examples of high-touch surfaces include counters, luggage carts, arm rests, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, pens, touch screens, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

To disinfect, use products that meet [EPA's criteria](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2 external icon, the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

Specific enhanced cleaning guidelines for key business areas:

Front Desk and Customer Service Areas. Surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized regularly. The general minimum frequency is every 60 minutes during operating hours and before and after every employee shift change (unless specified in the sections below).

- Touchscreen computers or kiosks must be wiped with a disinfectant after each use.

Restrooms: All facilities must be supplied with hand soap and single-use paper napkins or towels to dry hands.

- Dispensers for soap, paper towels and toilet paper should also be fully stocked.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect door handles, sink faucets and toilet handles, towel dispenser handle, soap dispenser push plates, baby changing station and trash receptacle touch points regularly.
- Employees should monitor restrooms frequently to ensure they do not require attention.
- Ensure that the health and safety poster promoting handwashing and disinfection is clearly visible.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Floor Care: All indoor areas such as entrance lobbies, corridors and staircases, escalators, elevators, security guard booths, meeting rooms, food service areas, cafeteria should be mopped with a proper disinfectant as listed above.

Elevators: All buttons, floor, handrails & other areas of the elevators that can be touched must be sanitized regularly.

- Facilities that do not have an elevator must secure a strict cleaning and disinfecting protocol for stairs and handrails.

7. **Health and Safety Signage.** All businesses must install and clearly display health and hygiene reminder posters throughout the business. Signs must be displayed and fully visible in the entrance area, service desk, bathroom areas and elevators. The messaging should emphasize the proper way for hand washing, use of hand sanitizers, maintaining social distance and the cautionary measures to avoid spread of germs and viruses.

8. **Staff Management Protocols:**

The use of face covering for staff members will be established and updated through the Executive Orders of the Department of Health Administrative Orders.

Health and Safety Officer: Businesses with a payroll of 5 employees or over, must appoint Health and Safety Officer. A second employee must be designated to take over the duties in case the primary Health and Safety Officer is on time off. This role does not have to be a new hire. It can be a responsibility given to an existing role or employee.

The Health and Safety Officer will be responsible to:

- Ensure the practice of the established guidelines and lead the implementation processes. He or she must take appropriate corrective and preventive actions when needed and strive to constantly improve the effectiveness of the safety and health measures.
- Conduct a detailed training workshop for all employees to review established guidelines and secure commitment to its implementation based on the on-going updates.
- Take action if an employee is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. Follow through the established protocol by the [Department of Health](#) for the [management of suspicious or confirmed cases](#) among employees.
- Reinforce personal hygiene (hand hygiene and cough and sneezing etiquette) throughout your operation.
- Clearly communicate each employee's role, responsibilities and how they can contribute to the effectiveness of the implementation of these measures.
- Inform staff of the implications and potential consequences of not following the guidelines.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

- Make sure that each employee has the appropriate protective equipment supplied by the employer, and that it is used as indicated in the Executive Orders.
- Discourage workers from using phones or personal screens during shifts unless it is an urgent matter.
- Make sure the capacity limits and the health and safety signage promoting hygiene and hand washing are properly displayed in the employee break areas.
- Identify a protocol to protect those that are at high risk or vulnerable. Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step protecting workers, customers, visitors, and others at a worksite (OSHA).
- Ensure that everyone in the staff is aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and what to do if a staff member or customer become symptomatic.
- Have proper disposable PPE equipment in stock in case a potential suspected case is identified.
- Establish an emergency communications plans, including a forum for answering workers' concerns (OSHA).
- Utilize the CDC's Guidelines of Businesses and Employers to maintain a safe work environment. The updated guidelines are available [HERE](#).
- Access the local updated information of the COVID-19 management via the [Health Department COVID-19 portal](#) accessible via [HERE](#).



Additional Measures Applicable to Lodging Businesses

In addition to the established protocol under the General Guidelines of this Protocol, the following are measures applicable to lodging businesses including Bed and Breakfasts (B&B), Hostels, Glamping Facilities, Guest Houses, Tourism Villas, Condo-Hotels, Hotels, Alternative Lodging, *Paradores* and *Posadas* of Puerto Rico.

- 1. Guest Experience:** the process to register guests for health screening, contact tracing and to obtain proof of vaccination will continue to evolve as the health crisis management progresses. Details of the current guest experience process will be clarified via the Tourism Guidelines memorandum that the PRTC shares following every [Executive Order](#) or the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#).

The management team and the appointed Health and Safety officer are responsible to follow through the updated protocol and its on-going revisions.

Check-In: At the time of check-in, guests must receive an orientation on the current local health and safety measures and capacity limits. These will be updated throughout the [Executive Orders](#) or [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#).

- 2. Customer Service Areas:** Front desk, luggage service and concierge stations must have a hand sanitizing station in the countertop or in a stand located in each area. Safe social distancing must also be observed. Counter surface must be wiped and disinfected periodically.
 - Having disposable wipes available for guests to use for sanitizing their phones or credit cards is highly encouraged.
- 3. Guest Elevators:** Continue to encourage safe distancing practice among patrons in the elevators.
 - Ensure that the safety instructions and elevators recommended capacity are clearly visible in the elevator lobby and inside each elevator unit.
 - A hand sanitizing station must be accessible in the elevator lobbies.
- 4. In-Room Experience and Amenities:**
 - Mini-bar service is allowed. Items must be properly cleaned and disinfected per guest stay.
 - Collateral material, such as magazines and brochures, are allowed in the room as long as these are properly cleaned and disinfected per stay.
- 5. Housekeeping**
 - Staff must follow through the updated guidelines regarding the use of face coverings and PPE that will be established through the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#). It is recommended that all housekeeping staff continue to use single-use gloves and closed shoes while working in



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

guestrooms. Wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before entering and after exiting a guestroom.

- Wash all hotel linens and towels according to the manufacturer's label and dry on the highest setting possible. Allow items to dry completely before removing. Staff should wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry.
 - Must follow the [CDC high level infection control procedures to collect, wash and dispose laundry](#). Unused towels must be discarded after each guest stay.
- With every housekeeping service, staff must clean and disinfect all room's hard surfaces including door handles, desk, table, chairs and lamps, dresser drawer handle, light switches and thermostats, drapery pull handles, fridges, menu and room collaterals (folders, brochures), telephone and keypad, remote control, alarm clock, television, peephole, Trash bin, Iron handle, hangers, and luggage rack, faucet and toilet handles.
- Per the [CDC guidelines](#), discard all single use items either provided by the hotel or left by the guest.
- Housekeepers must wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after handling waste.
- A cleaning and disinfection **Certification Card** must be placed on the bed top after finishing the cleaning service, and before leaving the room. The card must state that the room was properly cleaned and sanitized. Must be signed with the date and time of the service.
- If a guest is ill and isolating in their hotel room, discontinue all but essential housekeeping services to the room.
- An enhanced room cleaning and disinfection protocols must be implemented after a guest who has been ill has checked out of the property:
 - Close off the room.
 - Wait 24 hours before you enter the room. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
 - If possible, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation.
 - Thoroughly clean and disinfect the room per the established guidelines.
 - Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
 - After the room has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for guest use.
- Ice machines buttons and surfaces on them must be regularly and thoroughly disinfected.
- **Service Elevators:** Minimum safe distance must be maintained and the number of employees using the elevator at one time must adjusted as appropriate.
 - Elevator floor and buttons must be sanitized regularly.
 - In case a suspected case is reported, there must be a designated elevator to manage these.
 - Recommend the installation of hand sanitizer dispensers inside the elevators.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

6. **Pool and Beach Areas:** Chairs and tables must be reconfigured to guarantee the minimum safe distance requirement and capacity limitations dictated on the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#).
 - Each chair and table must be disinfected before and after each use. Staff must be trained to secure this practice.
 - Self-service towels management is not recommended. Towels must be handed by an employee wearing the appropriate protective gear. Guests cannot get their own towel or touch other towels. The recommended protocol for properties without pool and beach attendants is to leave the towels inside the guestrooms as part of the housekeeping service.
 - Secure ready to use disinfectant wipes stations in strategic locations around the pool lounge and beach chairs area to facilitate the disinfection of surfaces.

7. **Spa and Fitness Facilities:** management and the Health and Safety Officer must follow through the safe physical distancing, hygiene measures and capacity limits enforced by the Department of Recreation and Sports that is updated with every [Department of Health Administrative Order](#).



Additional Measures Applicable to Restaurants and Bars Located within Lodging Properties

In addition to the established protocol under the General Guidelines of this Protocol, the following are measures applicable to food and beverage outlets located within lodging facilities.

1. **Capacity Limit and Safe Distancing:** The dining room floor plan must be rearranged to guarantee the safe distance requirement and capacity limitations that is updated with every [Department of Health Administrative Order](#).
2. **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** All table and surfaces must be thoroughly sanitized after each service. This includes dining tables and bar surface top.
3. **Menus, Cocktail Lists and Wine Lists:** It is recommended to use single-use paper menus, digital menus, or menu boards far from customers reach. All physical menus must be cleaned and sanitized after each customer use.
4. **Table setting.** It is recommended that cutlery, glasses, napkins and any table setting such must be brought to the table by the wait staff after customer is seated.
5. **Buffet style serving,** salad bars and self-serving service food options are allowed as long as there is a hand sanitizing station located near the station. It is recommended to have the hand sanitizing unit at the buffet initial point (right before patrons begin to serve themselves).
6. **Reservation Systems:** whenever possible, it is recommended to continue using reservations to avoid crowding, especially at peak hours.
7. **Kitchen and Back of the House:** All restaurant management and kitchen staff must revise the Managing Operations in a Foodservice Establishment established by the FDA.
 - Follow the 4 key steps to food safety established by the FDA: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.
 - Employees must sanitize equipment and surfaces that have come in contact with food and kitchen instruments and must do so after each task (FDA).
 - Cutting boards, blenders, grills, and countertops should also be washed and disinfected after each use.
 - All supplies need to be fully sanitized before entering the kitchen, storage, and refrigerators.
 - Check that dish washing machines are operating at the required wash and rinse temperatures and ensure that the restaurant is using the appropriate detergents and sanitizers.
 - Access to the kitchen, storage and staff areas by customers and the public must be restricted.
 - All employees must always wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before their shifts and preparing food.
 - All employees should be encouraged to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth always.



Additional Measures Applicable to Short-term Rentals

Legally and properly registered properties are the only properties authorized to operate. Short-term rental properties, must be duly registered and identified by their Innkeepers number at the PRTC as per Act 272-2003. For information on registration and identification visit [HERE](#). If a listing is not duly registered, it's illegally operating and is subject to fines and penalties as outlined under Act 272-2003 and Executive Order 2020- 044.

In addition to the general guidelines observed in the first section of the protocol, the following are additional mandated measures for the short-term rentals:

1. **Hand sanitizer:** All units must provide at least one hand sanitizing unit per stay. The sanitizer station should be strategically placed close to the entrance door and visible upon guest entrance.
2. **Hand soap:** The innkeeper must provide hand soap for guests at each sink with running water. The supply or size of the soap must be adequate for the number of days the guest is staying in the unit. The innkeeper is responsible for replenishing, as necessary. If unit is stocked with bar soap, it should be disposed and replaced upon registration of new guest.
3. **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** Owners, Innkeepers and attendants must comply with all General Mandatory Guidelines detailed in the first part of this guide. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - cleaning and maintenance staff must be trained to implement the new health and safety standards detailed on this guide.
 - It is recommended that all housekeeping staff use single-use gloves when servicing each unit. Gloves must be disposed after each cleaning shift.
 - The CDC recommended process to collect and wash laundry must be followed. All towels and linen must be replaced and properly washed after each customer's stay. Unused towels and amenities cannot be repurposed.
 - It is recommended to open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area when servicing the unit.
 - Clean and disinfect all personal hard surfaces including door handles, desk, table, chairs and lamps, dresser drawer handle, light switches and thermostats, drapery pull handles, fridge, collaterals (magazines, brochures), telephone and keypad, remote control, alarm clock, television, peephole, trash bin, Iron handle, hangers, and luggage rack, faucet, toilet seat and handles, shower head, stove buttons and surfaces, oven and microwave.
 - All cookware, glasses, cutlery, serving utensils, coffee makers must be cleaned after each stay.
 - After completing the proper cleaning and disinfecting procedure, a tent card or postcard must be placed in the living area certifying that the rental unit was properly sanitized according to standards.
 - Placed strategically and noticeably by renter upon entering the rental unit.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

- The card must be signed and include date and time the service was provided.
- If a combination lock or key storage unit is used, make sure it is disinfected regularly and before each guest checks in.
- Establish a protocol to report and handle any suspected or positive cases of COVID-19 in each rental unit, in accordance with the [Puerto Rico Health Department](#) guidelines.

Measures Applicable to Casinos



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

In addition to the general guidelines observed in the first section of the protocol, the following are the specific measures to be observed by casinos:

1. **Capacity Restrictions:** business capacity limits will be established through either [Executive Orders](#) or the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#) that will be periodically published. These will be further clarified in the guidelines memorandum that the PRTC sends out to the industry stakeholders following the release of each [Executive Order](#) or [Administrative Order](#).

Capacity restriction posters: all businesses must install and clearly display the current capacity restriction posters throughout the different areas of the business. The official capacity limit poster from the Puerto Rico Health Department can be downloaded [HERE](#).

2. **Use of Mask and Face Coverings:** the guidelines for the mandatory use of face coverings for patrons and employees will be periodically reviewed, and will be established through either [Executive Orders](#) or the [Department of Health Administrative Orders](#) that will be periodically published. These will be further clarified in the guidelines memorandum that the PRTC sends out to the industry stakeholders following the release of each [Executive Order](#) or [Administrative Order](#).
3. **Hand Sanitizing Stations** – All businesses must have hand sanitizer dispensers readily available for all customers. These must be strategically situated in the entrance, floor area, change machines, cashier cage, and throughout the slots machine areas. It is recommended to have a dispenser in every gaming table.
 - a. The stations must be visible for all, and the use of it must be complimentary.
 - b. Must use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizing solutions.
 - c. When possible, it is recommended to provide contactless stations.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Additional Measures Applicable to Tourist Transportation Providers

1. **Cleaning and Disinfecting:** the vehicle (car, van, or bus) must be disinfected and periodically.
2. **Hand Sanitizing:** it is recommended to have hand sanitizer readily available for all passengers. Drivers should encourage passengers to sanitize their hands before boarding the vehicle.
3. **Use of face coverings:** drivers and riders must follow the mandated use of face covering that will be updated with each Executive Order.



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY

Additional Measures Applicable to Tour Operators and Attractions Managing Equipment

In addition to the established protocol under the General Guidelines of this Protocol, the following must be observed by tour operators:

- 1. Cleaning and Disinfection of Equipment:** every piece of equipment to be used by participant must be disinfected with EPA-approved disinfectants prior to its use. The operator must have the equipment at the ready and easily accessible in case a participant requires the operator to disinfect it in front of them.
 - The tour operator must provide sanitizing equipment with an alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizing solution.
 - Tours must be limited securing appropriate time for equipment to be cleaned and disinfected according to the recommendations of the EPA-approved products.