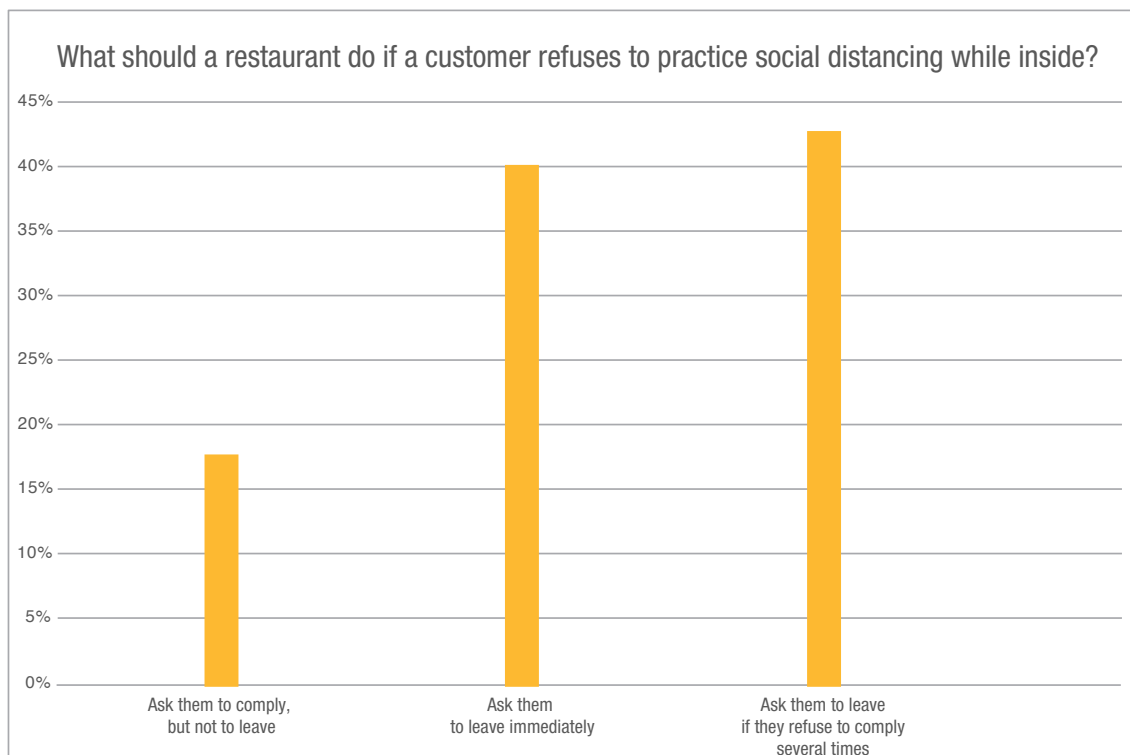




KITCHEN INTELLIGENCE
FROM SHAMROCK FOODS®

DIFFUSING THE EXTREMES

The majority of consumers comfortable with returning to in-restaurant dining are ready, willing and able to comply with societies new norms and policies regarding mask use and social distancing. However, some potentially more extreme opinions are manifesting themselves in restaurant settings. While this vocal minority rarely cause disruption in restaurants, it's considered a best practice to be prepared for these situations in terms of diffusion, de-escalation and resolution.



Datassential, June 2020

BEST PRACTICES TO INTERVENE AND DIFFUSE SOCIAL DISTANCING NON-COMPLIANCE OF RESTAURANT CUSTOMERS

Use Training to Prepare

- ☐ During a staff meeting train what to look and listen for like behavior changes, body language, and raised or angry voices
- ☐ Role play situations before they happen in real time to ease tensions, discuss what went well and determine what can be improved
- ☐ Ensure management is nearby and involved in helping to diffuse the situation if it begins to escalate

How to Diffuse

- ☐ Use the Three “P’s”
 - Be Prepared
Know what you are going to say based on your role play training
Practice what you are a going to say
Have a co-worker/manager standing by to assist if needed
 - Be Poised
Stay calm and in control of the situation
 - Be Professional
Keep your voice calm and never physically contact the guest
- ☐ Use “I” Statements Like...
 - I’m sorry, but because of local ordinances and store policies, I can’t seat or serve you without a face covering
 - I understand that you are frustrated but I have no choice other than to comply with local requirement regarding safety
 - I know you disagree with my decision, but I’m required to keep everyone at the restaurant as safe as I possibly can
- ☐ Don’t Use “You” Statements Like...
 - You’re not getting seated unless you comply with the rules
 - You’re causing a disruption. Unless you put on a face covering you will be forced to leave.
“You Statements” should only be used in extremely rare circumstances where someone’s physical safety is being threatened

How to De-escalate

- ☐ Offer safe options
- ☐ Give polite ultimatums
- ☐ Distance the situation
 - Move the two arguing guests to different areas of the dining area, if possible
 - Assign a new server as a way to create a “do over”
- ☐ Give the customer time
 - If the customer is cooperating give him/her time to talk things out with you and calm down

How to Resolve

- ☐ Communicate
 - Communicate table side to resolve the situation
 - Go back a few minutes later to touch base
 - Meet the guest at the door as they are exiting
- ☐ Determine if the situation is salvageable
 - Has the customer shown good faith?
- ☐ Decide if you should invite the customer back
 - “Thank you for working with us during these times. We look forward to having you again. Please let me know next time you’re here. I’d like to say hello.”
 - “We don’t feel we will be able to serve you properly going forward based on the new regulations and store policies. We apologize, but we think it is best you not return to the restaurant.”
- ☐ Conduct a “debrief” with any employees involved afterwards as these types of situations can be stressful and upsetting



<https://www.shamrockfoodservice.com/reopening-resources/>

