

# **Scripts: Responding to Difficult Guest Situations during a Pandemic**

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**Providing positive guest experiences during a pandemic or a period of elevated risk of COVID-19 in the community can be challenging. This is especially true when some guests are not following businesses' established health and safety protocols.**

**go2HR has developed this script document for frontline staff to refer to in tough situations. Our team of HR, health and safety and training experts have developed scenarios which workers could encounter in their workplace, and suggested scripts on how to respond to challenging interactions.**

**It's important to remain knowledgeable and prepared, as BC transitions to a communicable disease prevention approach. Many COVID-19 best practices may still apply in your workplace and the way in which you convey the necessary information to your guests can make all the difference when it comes to their overall experience.**

**When looking at the scenarios on vaccinations, a few key points should be considered when it comes to balancing health & safety concerns and customers' demands with privacy legislation. More info [here](#)**

# SCENARIO 1: Guest is not wearing a mask on approaching the building

## Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hello, welcome to <business>. We are asking all guests to wear masks. Do you have a mask with you, or may I provide one for you?

**Guest:** Of course, I forgot. Will put it on right away.

**Employee:** Thank you for your understanding. We really appreciate it!

## Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Welcome to <business>. We require all guests to wear masks at all times.

**Guest:** I left mine in the car and really don't want to walk back and pick it up.

**Employee:** That's okay, we have complementary single-use masks available. I am happy to provide you with one.

**Guest:** I think I will be fine without one.

**Employee:** I understand, but I am afraid we are not going to be able to provide you service today without a mask.

**Guest:** Why not? I don't feel sick, so I don't see why this is such a big deal.

**Employee:** The mandatory mask policy is required by law as per the provincial Health Officer order, ensuring that all our guests and staff stay safe. I understand that this is inconvenient but it is necessary for everyone to follow the rules.

**Guest:** Well, I'm not going to wear one, so you're losing my business if you don't let me in.

**Employee:** We appreciate your business, but are unable to make exceptions, as this is a province-wide mandate. We will be happy to serve you with a mask on anytime you choose to return."

**OR**

**Employee:** We appreciate your business, but are unable to make exceptions to our health and safety protocols at this time. As an alternative, we could offer you take-out service or delivery".

## SCENARIO 2: Guest does not sanitize their hands upon entry

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Welcome to our store. May I remind you to sanitize your hands, please?

**Guest:** Sure thing.

**Employee:** Thank you, I really appreciate your understanding.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Welcome. We are asking all guests to use hand sanitizer prior to entering. Please help yourself.

**Guest:** I don't like this stuff.

**Employee:** We do require all guests to sanitize their hands for us to be able to provide service. If you have your own sanitizer, you are welcome to use that instead.

**Guest:** No, don't have my own as I don't like sanitizers in general.

**Employee:** So sorry, but we will unfortunately not be able to grant you access to the store.

## SCENARIO 3: Diners cruise to different tables in a restaurant, pub, or bar

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hello all. Just a gentle reminder that during these times visiting other tables is not permitted, sorry.

**Guest:** Okay, got it.

**Employee:** Thank you for understanding.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** I am sorry to interrupt, but all guests are required to stay at their own table during these times.

**Guest:** We are just going over for a quick hello, not a big deal.

**Employee:** I understand, but it is a requirement for all guests to be seated at their assigned table at all times, unless getting up to use the washroom. We cannot serve any guests who are not sitting down at their own table.

**Guest:** That's okay, I'll just sit down here then!

**Employee:** Unfortunately, that is not an option right now. All guests must be seated at the table they were assigned when coming in.

**Guest:** But these are my friends from work – I see them all the time, so it's not unsafe.

**Employee:** I understand, but we cannot make exceptions at this time. The protocols are in place to keep all our guests and staff safe. If you like, you may catch up with your friend outside at a safe distance, and return to your assigned seat once inside. I'm afraid I cannot provide you with service otherwise.

**Guest:** Fine.

**Employee:** Thank you for understanding.

## **SCENARIO 4: Guest refuses to stand two-meters apart while in line at a restaurant**

### **Ideal Scenario**

**Employee:** Hello, the line seems to be getting compact, may I ask everyone to take a step back, there should be 2 metres between each bubble.

*Guests move to accommodate the request*

**Employee:** Thank you all for your understanding, I appreciate it.

### **Alternate Scenario**

**Employee:** Thanks for visiting us today. May I ask you to stand on the circle indicated on the floor please?

*Guests do not comply*

**Employee:** Maintaining 2 metres distance in the line-up is a safety requirement at our restaurant, because we don't have a lot of space. Please use the markings to guide you as you move along.

*Guests still do not comply*

**Employee:** If you are unable to maintain 2 metres of space between the guests in front or behind you, I will have to ask you to leave the line-up.

## SCENARIO 5: Guest is not wearing mask properly in the store

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Thanks for shopping with us today. Your mask seems to have slipped down. May I ask you to adjust it please?

**Guest:** Oh, did not realize it. Thanks for reminding me.

**Employee:** Thank you for doing your part to keep us all safe.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** How are you today? We ask all guests to wear masks covering their nose, mouth, and chin. May I offer you one of our disposable masks?

**Guest:** I have my mouth covered, that should be enough, no?

**Employee:** This is a common misconception. For the mask to be effective it must cover the nose, mouth, and chin.

**Guest:** Yeah, I don't believe in that stuff.

**Employee:** Unfortunately, we cannot serve anyone who is wearing the mask incorrectly. Please adjust your mask to continue shopping in our store.

## SCENARIO 6: Guest wants the hotel room cleaned while they are in it

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Good morning. Your room can be cleaned every day. Please let us know when you will be out, and we will clean your room during that time.

**Guest:** I will be out in the afternoon, so you can service the room then.

**Employee:** That's great, thanks for being so accommodating.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** We are happy to clean your room when it is vacant. When would you like us to return?

**Guest:** I am not going out today, so you can go ahead and clean while I am working at my desk.

**Employee:** I'm sorry, our current policy is to clean rooms when guests are out. May I bring some fresh linens to your door instead?

## SCENARIO 7: On the ski hill, skiers are standing too close together in the lift line up

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hope you are having a great ski day today. Please remember the 2 metres distance applies in the lift line up, thank you.

**Guest:** Sure thing, what a great day today.

**Employee:** Thank you for working with us, I appreciate it!

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Sorry Sir, please wait for a moment as we require at least 2 metres between each rider.

*Guests keeps on pushing forward*

**Employee:** I'm sorry but you cannot move forward at this time. Please maintain the 2-metre distance to keep your spot in the line-up.

## SCENARIO 7: Guests refuses to comply with policy (masking, distancing) due to being vaccinated

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Welcome! Just to let you know, we're asking all guests to wear a mask and maintain 6 feet of distance from others in all common areas. That way, everyone will feel more comfortable.

**Guest:** I have been vaccinated. Do I still have to wear a mask and distance?

**Employee:** Thanks for asking! Yes, all guests must follow the Public Health Orders, even when vaccinated.

**Guest:** Sure, no problem!

## Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Hi there, I just want to remind you that we're asking all guests to wear a mask and stay 6 feet apart in all common indoor areas.

**Guest:** I'm vaccinated, so that doesn't apply to me.

**Employee:** That's great! However, the mask mandate applies to all of our guests, regardless of vaccination status until there is a change/update in the orders. Keeping apart also helps everyone to feel more comfortable.

## SCENARIO 8: An employee wants to know if his/her co-workers are vaccinated

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hey [supervisor] I would like to know if my co-workers are vaccinated?

**Supervisor:** Hi there, while we encourage everyone to get vaccinated, we do not collect that information from our staff for privacy reasons and it is the employees' decision if they would like to share their vaccination status with others or not. However, as you know, we are following the proper safety protocols, which is keeping all of us safe.

**Employee:** Thanks.! I just personally feel uncomfortable around people who are not vaccinated.

**Supervisor:** That's understandable, it has been a very stressful year and a half. I understand why you might feel uncomfortable. We will review our safety protocols during our team huddle tomorrow, to remind everyone to keep following the rules.

**Employee:** Thank you, I would appreciate that.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Hey [supervisor] I would like to know if my co-workers are vaccinated?

**Supervisor:** Hi there, due to privacy laws we have to respect everyone's privacy around personal health information. We have no way of knowing if everyone on staff is vaccinated. However, we do encourage everyone to get vaccinated and as you know, we are following the proper safety protocols, which is keeping all of us safe.

**Employee:** I'm concerned for my safety! I don't want to work with people who are not vaccinated and I feel this is an unsafe environment.

**Supervisor:** I hear your concerns, it has been a very stressful year and a half. I want to reassure you that this is a safe place to work. What can we do to make you feel safe while you are at work in addition to reinforcing our safety protocols?

**Employee:** I will continue to wear a mask and keep my distance, as I am concerned for my health.

## SCENARIO 9: Guest inquiries about employees' vaccination status

### Ideal Scenario

**Supervisor:** Welcome! How can I help you today?

**Guest:** Hi there, is your staff all vaccinated?

**Supervisor:** While we encourage everyone to get vaccinated, we do not collect that information from our staff for privacy reasons. However, I can assure you that we have safety protocols in place to keep all of our guests and employees safe.

**Guest:** That makes sense. Thank you.

### Alternate Scenario

**Supervisor:** Welcome! How can I help you today?

**Guest:** Hi there, can I ask you if your staff is vaccinated?

**Supervisor:** With all due respect, we do not collect that information from our staff for privacy reasons. However, I can assure you that we have safety protocols in place to keep all of our guests and employees safe.

**Guest:** I'm concerned for my safety and would want to just deal with staff that is vaccinated.

**Supervisor:** I completely understand your concern; however, this is a request I won't be able to grant, as we must respect the privacy of our employees. I would like to emphasize that our entire team is committed to following all safety measures to provide a safe experience for our guests. We want to ensure that you have a positive experience at our business.

**Guest:** Okay, thank you.

# SCENARIO 10: Customers want to know if their server is vaccinated

## Ideal Scenario

- Server:** Hello, my name is Asia and I'll be your server tonight, how are you?
- Guests:** Hi, we are good, thank you, could you please let us know if you are vaccinated before we proceed with our order?
- Server:** Sorry, that's private information. I won't be sharing my personal health details. I can start you off with some drinks. What would you like?
- Guests:** We are not comfortable with someone who is not vaccinated. Are you vaccinated?
- Server:** I can assure you we take all the government health guidance seriously here and have our safety protocols in place to provide you with a safe and positive dining experience, no matter who is serving you tonight.
- Guests:** Well okay... We would like two Long Island iced teas.

## Alternate Scenario

- Server:** Hello, my name is Asia and I'll be your server tonight, how are you?
- Guests:** Hi, we are good thank you, could you please let us know if you are vaccinated before we proceed with our order?
- Server:** Sorry, that's private information. I won't be sharing my medical information with others. I can start you off with some drinks. What would you like?
- Guests:** We are not comfortable with someone being our server who is not vaccinated. So, are you vaccinated or not?
- Server:** Sorry, as mentioned before we don't share our personal health information with our guests. I can assure you we take all the government health regulations seriously here to provide you with a safe dining experience. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to make your stay a pleasant and comfortable one.
- Guests:** No, thank you. We will take our business somewhere else.

**Server:** Very sorry to hear that and I hope that we will be able to welcome you back in the future.

## SCENARIO 11: Guest shows signs of being unwell

### Ideal Scenario

**Server:** Hello, my name is Asia and I'll be your server today, how are you?

**Guests:** Hi, we are concerned. That man over there keeps coughing and sneezing. We are worried that he might have COVID-19. Can you do something?

**Server:** Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I will talk with my supervisor and she will handle it from there.

**Guests:** Thank you.

### Alternate Scenario

**Server:** Hello, my name is Asia and I'll be your server today, how are you?

**Guests:** Hi, we are concerned. That man over there keeps coughing and sneezing. We are worried that he might have COVID-19. Can you do something?

**Server:** Sorry to hear that. Although there is no way to be sure if the man is sick with COVID-19 or he just has allergies. I can propose to move you to another table, if that helps.

**Guests:** No, this doesn't solve the issue. You have a man in here who is sick, he could be spreading COVID-19.

**Server:** I understand that he appears sick, but he might just be having allergies. We cannot ask him to leave, but I will go over to speak with him to make sure he is okay.

**Guests:** Oh, we didn't think of that. It is allergy season after all. However, we would like to take you up on that offer to being moved to another table.

# SCENARIO 12: A co-worker shows signs of being unwell

## Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Good morning. How are you? You don't look quite so well, are you okay?

**Co-worker:** Yeah, doing okay. Has just been a bit of a rough start this morning and my throat feels really itchy.

**Employee:** That does not sound too good. You should let our supervisor know that you are not feeling well and go home to rest.

**Co-worker:** Yes, you are right. I should have stayed home in the first place and called in sick.

## Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Good morning. How are you? You don't look quite so well, are you okay?

**Co-worker:** Yeah, doing okay. Has just been a bit of a rough start this morning and my throat feels really itchy.

**Employee:** That does not sound too good. You should let our supervisor know that you are not feeling well and go home to rest.

**Co-worker:** Not to worry, I will be fine in a little while. Going to get a cup of coffee and then I will be up and running.

**Employee:** I am concerned that you might be really sick and then pass it on to others on the team. It is important that we all support a healthy work environment.

**Co-worker:** Why are you making such a big deal about this? I am going to be fine.

**Employee:** Sorry, but if you don't talk to our supervisor and let him know that you are not feeling well, I will go and tell him. You know, we have safety protocols in place, which need to be followed to keep everyone safe around here.

# Things to Remember

- ✓ Body language is 55% of the message, tone of voice is 38% and words are only 7%. So, these sentences require delivery with sincerity, tact and confidence
- ✓ It is always better to be proactive rather than reactive, think of how to inform the guest before arrival
- ✓ Where this document says guests, feel free to change it to clients, patients, participants, or students, etc.
- ✓ Practise these responses with your teams and find the ones that suit your personality or the personality of the business
- ✓ To every "No" there is an alternative
- ✓ These guests are our bread and butter, we want them to return to us in the future, so do what you can to remain professional
- ✓ Although, we are in step 3 of the restart plan, guests come to your business with different levels of anxiety and practicing understanding and respect should be part of your customer service toolkit