

# **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 indoors, however the business requires guests to wear a mask.

## Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hello, welcome to <business>. We are asking all guests to wear a mask. 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 a mask 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 complimentary 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? The mask mandate is over. I don't feel sick, so I don't see why this is such a big deal?

**Employee:** Although wearing a mask indoors is no longer mandated, our business has chosen to keep the mask requirement for the time being. We want to ensure that all our guests and staff feel safe. I understand that this is inconvenient but we appreciate your understanding.

**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 to our policy. 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 the policy. As an alternative, we could offer you take-out service or delivery.

### **If the business is a food establishment:**

We only require you to wear your mask until you are seated at your table and when moving around the restaurant, that's all.

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

### Ideal Scenario

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

**Guest:** Sure thing.

**Employee:** Thank you, very much appreciated.

### 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, I don't have my own, as I don't like sanitizers in general.

**Employee:** May I offer you a pair of disposal gloves prior to browsing in our store? Otherwise, we will unfortunately not be able to grant you access to the store.

## SCENARIO 3: Guest wants the hotel room cleaned while they are in it

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Good morning. We are pleased to offer a daily room cleaning service. 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, as per our company guidelines, your room cannot be serviced with you present. May I bring some fresh linens to your door instead?

## SCENARIO 4: On the mountain biking trail, mountain bikers are standing too close together in the lift line up

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Hope you are having a great day today. Please remember our company policy states to stay 2 meters distance away when in the lift line up, thank you.

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

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

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Sorry Sir, please can I ask you to wait for a moment? We are asking guests to maintain two metres of separation in the lift line up so that everyone feels comfortable.

*Guests keeps on pushing forward*

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

## SCENARIO 5: In the elevator, guests are ignoring the maximum occupancy rules

### Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Sorry to keep you waiting, but we are requesting that only two guests from different groups take the elevator at one time, for everyone's safety. You shouldn't have to wait long for the next elevator to come.

**Guest:** No problem, we'll wait for the next one. That makes sense.

**Employee:** Thank you, I appreciate your patience.

### Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** I'm sorry but we are requesting that only two guests from different groups ride in the elevator together. Thank you for patiently waiting for the next one.

**Guest:** There is enough space for another person.

**Employee:** Yes, the elevator has capacity to fit more passengers and we hope to get back to full capacity soon. For now, we are doing our best to make sure that everyone feels comfortable in the elevator, as we transition through BC's

restart plan. Please wait for the next elevator, it should arrive shortly.

**Guest:** No, no that's okay. We really don't mind squeezing in.

**Employee:** I'm sorry but I cannot send the elevator up with you at this time. Feel free to wait for the next elevator to arrive or take the stairs to your right up to the second floor. We have to think about the comfort of all our guests. This is why we are transitioning slowly away from the COVID-19 protocols.

## SCENARIO 6: 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 requested to stay at their own table during these times.

**Guest:** We are just going over for a quick hello, not a big deal. Thought the rules had been relaxed around this?

**Employee:** I understand, but there is still 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 7: 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. However, 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 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 think I will continue to wear a mask, as I am concerned for my health.

# SCENARIO 9: A group of guests are telling an employee that they are not all vaccinated. Can the employee refuse to serve them?

## Ideal Scenario

**Guests:** Hey [employee], we are not all vaccinated! This pandemic is a joke.

**Employee:** Hi there... I'll be right back with you.

**Employee:** Hey [Supervisor] that group of guests over there told me they are not vaccinated. Can we refuse them service? I don't feel safe around them.

**Supervisor:** That's understandable that you may be concerned. However, we won't be refusing service to our customers, as you know, proof of immunization is not required to enter our business. If it makes you feel more comfortable, I can send another employee to help them.

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

## Alternate Scenario

**Guests:** Hey [employee], we are not all vaccinated! This pandemic is a joke.

**Employee:** Hi there... I'll be right back with you.

**Employee:** Hey [Supervisor] that group over there told me they are not vaccinated. Can we refuse them service? I don't feel safe around them.

**Supervisor:** That's understandable that you may be concerned. However, we won't be refusing service to our customers, as they are following the current rules and proof of immunization is not required for anyone to enter our business. I would offer to send someone else to help those guests, however we are short staffed today. I would appreciate it if you could look after the group. How about you wear your mask and observe physical distancing?

**Employee:** Well thank you for the chat, I'll keep my distance.

# 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.

# SCENARIO 13: Capacity restrictions for small businesses

## Ideal Scenario

**Employee:** Welcome. How are you today? We have quite a small store, therefore we still observe capacity restrictions and can only let 6 people in at a time. Would you mind waiting a few minutes outside and I will call you as soon as one of our customers leaves?

**Guest:** Sure thing, I will have a seat outside here and finish my coffee. Just let me know when I can come in.

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

## Alternate Scenario

**Employee:** Thanks for visiting us today. We have quite a small store, therefore we still observe capacity restrictions and can only let 6 people in at a time. Would you mind waiting a few minutes outside and I will call you as soon as one of our customers leaves?

**Guest:** I don't understand why you still have these rules in place. We have been in step 3 for a few weeks now and I thought everything was finally getting back to normal.

**Employee:** I understand your frustration and I am as pleased as you are that many restrictions have now been lifted. However, we have quite a small store and in order to be able to provide our guests with a safe and positive shopping experience, we have chosen to keep the capacity restrictions in place for now. We appreciate your understanding.

**Guest:** Okay, guess that makes sense.

# 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