

Comprehensive Guide to Sneeze Guards



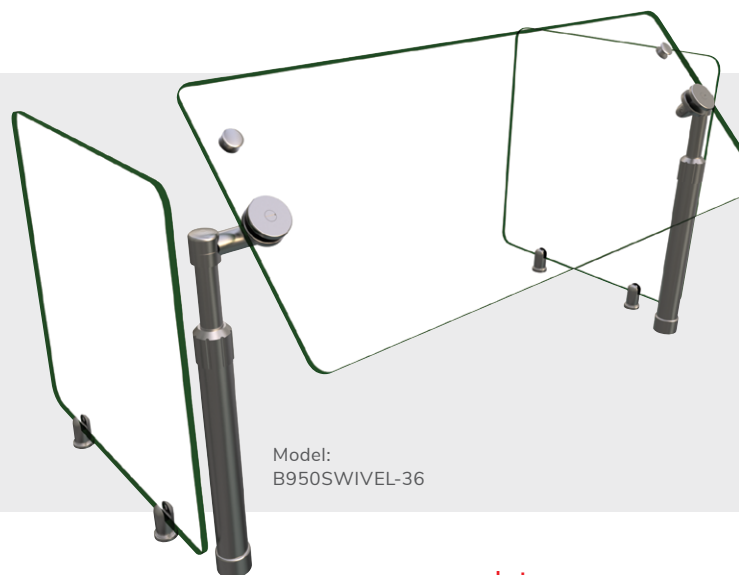
Food safety is a primary concern for every foodservice operator. From family-run restaurants to c-stores to large-scale enterprises, the responsibility is on management to be certified in food handling and capable of training their team in best practices of the health code. But, what about transitional areas like buffets, grab-n-go shelves or action stations where customers come in contact with food? Customers aren't trained or certified in matters of public health. So, the question is — how can you help customers protect themselves? Enter the sneeze guard.

It's easy to overlook (or look right through) a sneeze guard, but it has been an ally of the foodservice operator for over six decades. From its beginnings at buffet restaurants to its role as the omnipresent workhorse of the pandemic, the sneeze guard has been there for us.

So join us on a deep dive into the wonderful world of sneeze guards, as we explore this versatile, customizable and necessary asset to your foodservice operation.

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Model:
B950SWIVEL-36

Sneeze Guard Basics

Look, but Don't Touch

Sneeze guards are clear shields made from tempered glass or acrylic plexiglass. They can be found in hospitals and at checkout counters, reception desks, service windows and foodservice operations worldwide. For purposes of this guide, we will be focusing on the utility of sneeze guards within the foodservice industry.

What does a sneeze guard do?

Simply put, sneeze guards help block respiratory droplets and unsavory physical contaminants from getting into food. When a steaming hotel pan of chicken pot pie, a cutting board with an herb-crusted roast beef or a perfectly arranged salad bar is set behind a sneeze guard, the message is clear to both guest and operator — this food is safe from contamination.

Sneeze Guards: The superheroes of food safety

Protect your food against a wide variety of contaminants including:



Respiratory droplets



Germs



Objects



Hair

Why are sneeze guards important?

To begin with, most state and local health departments require sneeze guards whenever food is in direct customer contact, like at a buffet, cafeteria line or catering event. Beyond that, sneeze guards are an important way for operators to signal to customers that they care about food safety. A recent Ecolab survey found that 80% of customers think it is important for foodservice operations to prevent the spread of germs.¹ Sneeze guards are instrumental in reassuring the public that you value their health. Customers can see for themselves that you are taking all the necessary precautions.



Customers who think it's important for foodservice operations to prevent the spread of germs.¹



Model: EP950-48

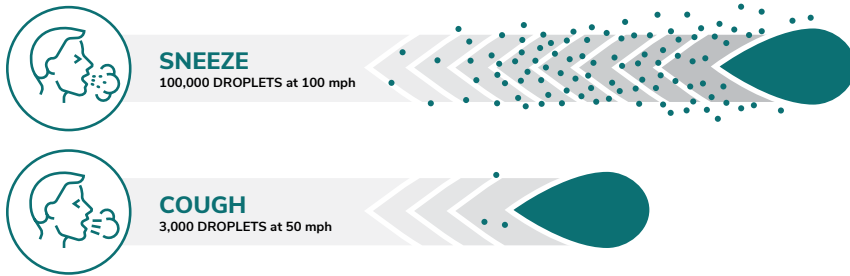
Sneeze Guards to the Rescue

The Science Is Clear

During the pandemic, everybody became hyperaware of droplets, airborne particles and aerosols. Everywhere you turned, news outlets illustrated the radius at which germs could be shared by breathing, speaking, singing, exercising, coughing or sneezing. COVID-19 might have been a new virus, but the means by which viruses and bacteria spread are as old as humankind.

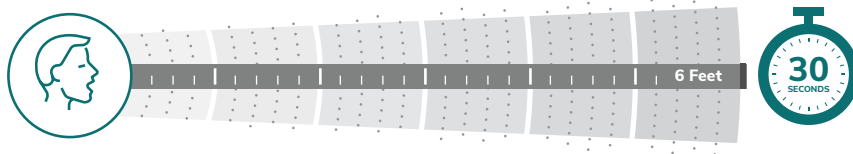
Coughs and sneezes, oh my

According to the American Lung Association, a single cough can travel as fast as 50 miles per hour (mph) and expel almost 3,000 droplets.² Meanwhile, sneezes can travel up to 100 mph and create upwards of 100,000 droplets. Sneeze guards can effectively catch these fast-traveling droplets and, more importantly, keep them off the food.



Other contaminants

But what if somebody isn't coughing or sneezing, simply asking for a slice of pork tenderloin? According to a study at Princeton University, researchers found that aerosols ejected during speech typically reached the 6-foot distance in about 30 seconds.³ That's enough time for three or four more people to visit the carving station. Thankfully, a sneeze guard protects the precious pork tenderloin for future buffet visitors.



One of the keys to safe food handling is protecting against contamination. Sneeze guards not only protect consumers from invisible contaminants; they also act as a protective barrier to prevent larger items getting in food. Potential food contaminants include anything that could fall off a person, such as earrings, skin particles, hair, gum or clothing fibers.



Germaphobia

The other mother of invention

When Johnny Garneau installed glass shields above the buffet lines of his restaurants in the late 1950s, it wasn't to stop people from sneezing on the food. It was designed to stop people from getting their noses close to the buffet items and sniffing them.

Garneau was the owner of a chain of smorgasbord restaurants in Ohio and Pennsylvania. He was also a self-described germaphobe. All-you-can-eat buffets were all the rage in 1950s America, and although Garneau's intent was to stop nosey customers, the additional sanitary benefits would soon spread.

Thanks to Garneau's ingenuity, buffet culture would be changed forever on March 10, 1959, when he filed a patent for a then-called "Food Service Table." By 1962, the "Model Foodservice Sanitation Ordinance" put out by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) referred to Garneau's invention as "counter protective devices" and "salad bar protective devices." Three years later, the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) had established criteria for the design and construction of "counter guards," yet another term for the much-beloved sneeze guard.

Garneau's patent ran out after 14 years, which is typical, but the DNA of his invention lives on in food codes and restaurants worldwide.

Choosing the Right Type of Sneeze Guard Through the Looking Glass

Selecting the right type of sneeze guard is like choosing the right dressing at the salad bar. Sure, any of them would work in a pinch. But you want to get it just right. Caesar dressing doesn't necessarily go well with orange wedges, even if, technically speaking, it is a salad. Similarly, you don't want your salad to be too big or too small for the plate. The point is that you want the right sneeze guard for the right function, and you want it to fit correctly.

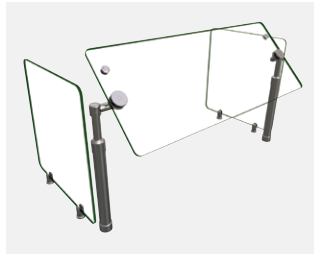
We'll begin by discussing Hatco's four primary categories of Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards: self-service, full-service (or pass-over), barrier and portable.

Self-service sneeze guards

This is the most dominant segment of the sneeze guard industry. Fittingly, Hatco offers the largest number of models in this category. Since customers aren't trained in safe food handling procedures, it is imperative to protect customers from themselves. Self-service sneeze guards are designed for one-sided and two-sided buffet configurations. Self-service models protect the food with a shield situated above it while providing adequate space for guests to administer their own quantities of food.



Model: B950-48



Model: B950SWIVEL-36



Model: ES29-48



Model: ES31-48



Model: ES40-48



Model: ES53-36



Model: ES67-48



Model: ES73-60



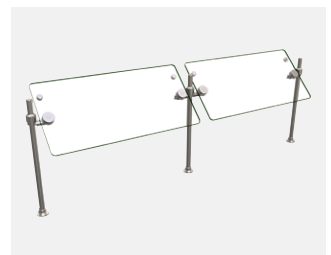
Model: ES82-36



Model: ES90-48



Model: ES92-60



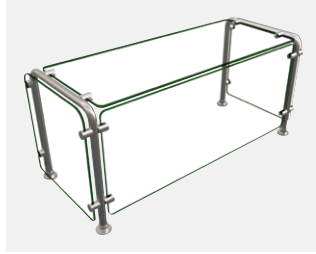
Model: ORBIT360-60

[Explore More Self-Service Sneeze Guards](#)

Full-service (or pass-over) sneeze guards

The full-service sneeze guard is also known as the pass-over sneeze guard in industry circles. As the name implies, the customer is hands-off. The food handling, slicing, assembling or scooping is left to the trained foodservice professional.

These models are designed for full-service restaurants or cafeterias. These types of units usually feature three sides of protection plus a shield at the top of the unit. With the customer-facing sides protected, that leaves one unshielded area for foodservice staff to access before passing over the delectable food to the customer.



Model: ED20-03615



Model: EP11-03618



Model: EP12-03618



Model: EP15-72



Model: EP21-03618



Model: EP22-06015



Model: EP36-48



Model: ORBIT100-48



Model: ORBIT900-03624

[Explore More Full-Service Sneeze Guards](#)

Barrier sneeze guards

These vertical safeguards are a subset of the full-service or pass-over sneeze guard category. They offer a small glass wall's worth of protection. Barriers are pivotal in showcasing carving or action stations in a buffet setting. The single pane allows unencumbered mobility for the foodservice professional to carve up, fry up or cook up something special for your guests.



Model: EP5-48



Model: EP5-RING-60



Model: EP7-24

[Explore More Barrier Sneeze Guards](#)

Portable sneeze guards

Portable sneeze guards allow maximum flexibility in your operation. Pop-up events, weekend brunches, off-site catering and special events often call for sneeze guards that are easy to transport and store. All of the portable Hatco models even have adjustable heights for adaptability to any type of event or cuisine.



Model: ALLIN1-36



Model: EP6-48



Model: EP950-36



Model: ORBIT720-60

[Explore More Portable Sneeze Guards](#)

What's in a name? EP, ES and ED

When a Hatco model number begins with EP, ES or ED, customers can expect a consistent look and the same exceptional manufacturing they always receive from Hatco.

Standard EP, ES and ED models feature:

- ▶ Stylish 1 in. (25 mm) diameter brushed stainless-steel posts
- ▶ 2 in (50 mm) diameter stainless steel finish flanges with unique tight-fitting flange covers that hide mounting screws and maximize cleanability (on most models)
- ▶ Durable 0.25 in. (6 mm) thick tempered-glass construction
- ▶ 0.75 in. (19 mm) radius glass corners with flat, polished edges (on most models)
- ▶ Glass face panel and two 18 in. (457 mm) deep glass end panels (on most models)
- ▶ Can be mounted to stainless steel, natural and engineered solid stone surfaces, as well as laminate countertops



Model: EP21

What's in a name? ORBIT

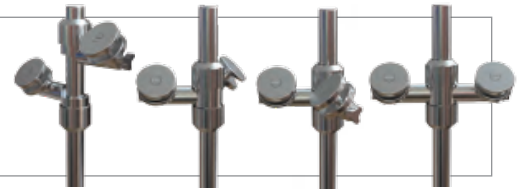
For the ultimate in fully-adjustable, user-friendly sneeze guards, Hatco offers the Flav-R-Shield® ORBIT series. Patented ORBIT adjustable brackets provide a multitude of pivoting options.

Standard ORBIT series features:

- ▶ Patented 15-degree increment rotating face panel, which has additional circular openings for optimum adjustment
- ▶ Mounting post height is adjustable up to 23 in. (583 mm) – based on pivoting face and adjustable post bracket
- ▶ Stylish 1 in. (25 mm) diameter brushed stainless-steel posts
- ▶ Durable 0.375 in. (10 mm) thick tempered-glass construction with 0.75 in. (19 mm) radius corners and flat polished edges – end panels are 0.25 in. (6 mm) thick
- ▶ Stainless-steel finish base feet are 1.5 in. wide x 14 in. deep (38 x 356 mm)



These patented adjustable faces are the secret sauce behind ORBIT's design. These brackets will send your flexibility options beyond the stratosphere.



Model:
ORBIT900-3624

For the ultimate in convertibility, there's the ORBIT900. Just like a convertible car, the convertible sneeze guard blends function and aesthetics to deliver flexibility with style. Depending on the needs of the day, convertible sneeze guards can switch from full-service to self-service and back again.



Daisy chain functionality

For some models, Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards can be linked to create a uniform appearance that conveys standardized utility. There's a simple beauty to daisy chains that are one part engineering and one part poetry.



Model: ES31-132

Configuring Your Sneeze Guard Is Easy It's Plain To See



Hatco has made it easier than ever to customize a sneeze guard to your exact specifications.

From dimensions to styles, finishes, mount options and more — there are a lot of details to specify with a Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guard build. Buyers should always use Hatco's Sneeze Guard Configurator tool to guide their selection process, as it's the best way to ensure all customization options and ordering requirements are considered. The configurator contains 360-degree views of each model family, unique adjustability features, product dimensions, a quotation generator, additional images, tutorial videos and specification sheets.

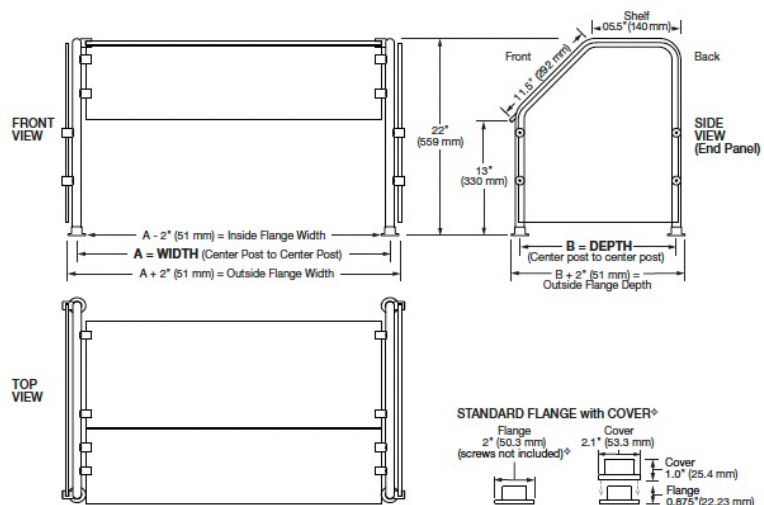
Visit hatcosneezeguards.com or click the below button to customize a sneeze guard using our handy online configurator.

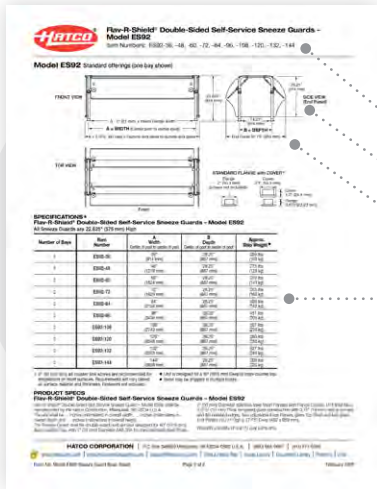
Configure It

The right fit

Fixed Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards can be mounted to stainless steel, natural and engineered solid stone surfaces, as well as laminate countertops. Our spec sheets clearly and precisely illustrate the dimensions of the sneeze guards, so that you know what to look for when measuring:

- ▶ Width
- ▶ Length
- ▶ Desired height
- ▶ Required clearance (for self-service)
- ▶ Shelf height (if applicable)





Reading the spec sheet

Our spec sheets present all the information needed to choose the standard sneeze guard system that is correct for you.

- ▶ Item number coordinates with center post to center post width
- ▶ Height (adjustable in some models)
- ▶ Depth from center post to center post (adjustable in some models)
- ▶ Number of bays (if applicable)

Flanges

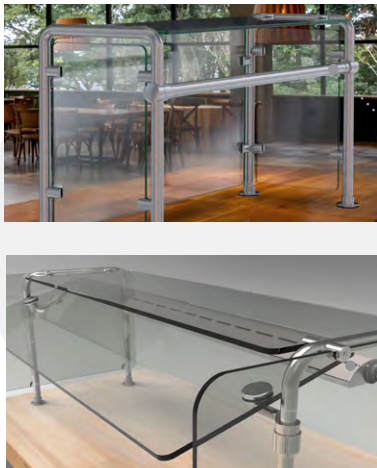
Three base flanges to choose from:



- ▶ Standard flange (with cover)
- ▶ Three-in-one below counter compression flange
- ▶ Above counter compression flange

Customization

The versatility doesn't end when you put down the measuring tape. The Sneeze Guard Configurator tool allows you to consider every last detail (not all features available on all models):



- ▶ Light Bar
- ▶ Add end panels
- ▶ Post finishes: Brushed Stainless Steel, Brushed Aluminum, Coated Black
- ▶ Add mid-shelves
- ▶ Optional built-in heat lamp



What equipment needs a sneeze guard

Whether you're upgrading existing equipment or placing a new equipment order, you may need sneeze guards. Remember that whenever the threshold between professional food handling and customers can be crossed, sneeze guards should be on your purchasing radar. These are some of the most common pieces of foodservice equipment compatible with sneeze guards:

- ▶ Induction cooktops
- ▶ Cold shelves
- ▶ Portable buffet warmers
- ▶ Hot food wells
- ▶ Cold food wells
- ▶ Carving stations



Model:
IRNG-HC1-18



Model:
CSBFX-48-S



Model:
HGSM-1P



Model:
CHW-FUL



Model:
IWB-6



Model:
GRCSCLH-24



Tempered glass vs. acrylic plexiglass

Is your sneeze guard transparent shield tough enough for the job? Traditional glass can crack or shatter easily. Acrylic plexiglass and tempered glass, on the other hand, are much more durable options. But which is the champ? Tempered glass is less likely to scratch, break or crack because its chemical makeup creates a durable and scratch-resistant surface. In addition, tempered glass doesn't yellow or dull with washing and is more heat-resistant than acrylic plexiglass. Almost all of the Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards are made with tempered glass, which can help extend the life of your purchase — giving you a stronger return on your investment.



Cleaning & maintenance corner

Remember sneeze guards are only as clean as the last time you washed them. Here are a few tips and reminders for taking care of your Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards:

- ▶ Safely cover or remove food before cleaning.
- ▶ Never spray cleaners directly onto sneeze guard surfaces.
- ▶ Spray cleaner into a non-abrasive cloth, and then wipe down surfaces.
- ▶ Use non-abrasive cleaners and cloths only. Abrasive cleaners and cloths could scratch finish of unit, marring its appearance and making it susceptible to soil accumulation.
- ▶ Use of abrasive materials will void warranty.
- ▶ 24-Hour / 7-Day Parts and Service Assistance available in the United States and Canada by calling 414-671-6350.

The Hatco Guarantee

Nothing To Sneeze At

Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards guarantee maximum protection, visibility, functionality and style to ensure you meet sanitation and food safety requirements for your school cafeteria kitchen, dining hall or elsewhere.

At Hatco, we stand by the equipment we manufacture, which is why we offer limited warranty protection on our equipment and certain equipment components against defects in materials and workmanship. This sets Hatco Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards apart from other manufacturers in the market.

Hatco quality

From inception to design to shipping your custom-made Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guard, Hatco stands for quality every step of the way.



At Hatco, we machine and bend all hardware and posts on-site. No welding and non-mitered corners mean a clean, sleek look without seams or other places for residue to build up. Our accurate tooling and fitting ensure the highest product integrity.

Hatco's sneeze guards are proudly made in the USA, and the glass is tempered on-site. Hatco also uses robotic systems and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machining to create complex pieces while maintaining the shortest lead time in the industry. The quality is clear.

From FDA food code to NSF certification

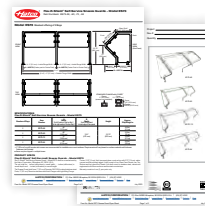
How do manufacturers ensure uniform standards for retail food safety and reduce complexity for purposes of compliance? That's where the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certification process comes into play.



The FDA's 2022 Food Code is 668 pages long. Section 3-306.11 on page 83 states, "FOOD on display shall be protected from contamination by the use of PACKAGING; counter, service line, or salad bar FOOD guards; display cases; or other effective means."



All 50 states, along with local, tribal and territorial partners, have adopted the FDA Food Code, but interpretation varies from agency to agency. The NSF analyzes, measures and tests sneeze guards against all the codes put forth by the FDA and sets a uniform standard.



The NSF interprets FDA Food Code and converts it into design compliance criteria. For example, you may wonder if the NSF can assess if Hatco's ES73 Flav-R-Shield® Self-Service Sneeze Guard is up to code. Short answer: Yes!



In fact, all fixed models of Hatco's Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guards are NSF certified. Hatco ensures compliance through the rigors of the NSF certification process so that you're automatically up to code.

How Hatco Can Deliver for You Window Dressing

At Hatco, we are passionate about helping our customers deliver on their missions in the public health arena. We strive to help our customers keep food safe and signal best health practices to the public. Our talented team at Hatco is committed to guiding you through the process of ordering a Flav-R-Shield® Sneeze Guard and providing technical assistance for installation and maintenance.



Our Sneeze Guard Configurator tool makes designing, planning and pricing a snap. Our machine shop keeps manufacturing in-house so that we can offer the highest quality and the fastest turnaround time. The Hatco Guarantee is tops in the industry, as we stand behind our products.

Get started today by contacting a **Hatco rep** or clicking below.

[Shop Hatco Sneeze Guards](#)

[Configure Your Hatco Sneeze Guard](#)



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¹ Ecolab, [The ROI of Restaurant Cleanliness](#), Nov. 4, 2021.

² American Lung Association, [How Fast is a Sneeze Versus a Cough? Cover Your Mouth Either Way!](#), lung.org blog post, last updated, Aug. 30, 2023.

³ Princeton University, [Research Shows Conversation Quickly Spreads Droplets More Than Six Feet Inside Buildings](#), Oct. 1, 2020.