Arkansas Department of Health

4815 West Markham Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-3867 • Telephone (501) 661-2000
Governor Asa Hutchinson
Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

Effective date: May 26, 2020

Directive on Resuming Bar or Club Operations

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109--110. Based on available scientific evidence, it is necessary and appropriate to take further action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in Arkansas remain safe.

On March 20, 2020, the Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, issued a directive that bars should cease dine-in operations in the state. This directive provides guidance on resumption of service at bars, through a phased approach. Bars housed within restaurants are addressed in the updated directive on Resuming Restaurant Dine-In Operations.

Phase 1

- Service at bars may resume on May 26, 2020; however, seating shall be limited to up to 33% of total seating capacity. This includes indoor and outdoor dining areas.
- Seating at tables shall be adjusted to maintain 10-foot physical distancing between tables so occupied seats are six feet from seats at adjacent tables.
- Seating at the bar shall maintain six feet of physical distancing between individuals.
- Reservations should be encouraged when practical. If reservations are not made, physical distancing must be maintained when customers are waiting to be seated.
- All staff who come in contact with patrons must wear a face covering or mask that completely covers their nose and mouth. Staff in the back are encouraged to wear a face covering or mask.
- Gloves used during food preparation shall be worn in accordance with the Rules Pertaining to Retail Food Establishments. Glove use by waitstaff and others who do not directly contact food or beverages with their hands is optional.
- Patrons must wear a face covering upon entrance and while in the restaurant until the food or drink is served. Service may be declined to patrons not wearing face coverings or masks.
- All staff shall be screened daily before entering the facility. Any employee with a cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath shall be immediately excluded from the facility.

- Signage must be placed at the front of restaurants to alert patrons not to enter the facility if they are sick or have symptoms such as cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath.
- Monitoring of frequent handwashing and no bare-hand contact of ready-to-eat foods by staff.
- Drinks shall be served to customers in individual glasses/containers. No shared containers of drinks, such as pitchers of beer or mixed drinks.
- Groups at one table shall not exceed 10 people.
- Self-service operations, including, but not limited to, bar snacks (pretzels, peanuts, etc.), buffets, and condiment bars shall remain closed for patron access.
- Facilities with any employee testing positive shall report the result to the Arkansas Department of Health immediately.
- Following each drink or meal service, the tables, chairs, menus and any other frequently contacted surfaces, including, but not limited to, condiment containers, napkin holders and salt/pepper shakers, shall be cleaned and disinfected prior to seating the next customer.
    - Products with an EPA-approved emerging viral pathogen claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for these products. For a list of EPA-approved emerging pathogen sanitizers: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2. (Non-food contact surfaces may be sanitized with 1/2 cup of regular, unscented bleach per gallon of water followed by a 5-minute contact time.)
- Food contact surfaces shall be sanitized in accordance with §4-501.114 of the Rules Pertaining to Retail Food Establishments.
- Single-use items including, but not limited to, disposable silverware, condiment packets, and straws shall be removed from public access and provided only upon request.
- Entertainment operations within bars (such as live music or live dancers, in-seat gaming, or arcades) are permitted, effective May 19, 2020. Entertainment involving performers, such as live musicians, singers or dancers, shall follow these requirements:
    - The performers or players must be separated from the audience by at least 12 feet.
    - Performers or players may be without a face covering if they are 12 feet from other persons, including other performers. Performers should wear a face covering while not performing.
- Dancing by patrons is prohibited at this time.
- In-seat gaming, arcades, billiards, and other games that patrons physically touch should be disinfected between each use.

- Restrooms and other high-touch areas shall be disinfected frequently based on customer volume.

The above restrictions will be in place until the Secretary of Health determines epidemiological data are sufficient to proceed to Phase 2 and then Phase 3. The requirements for Phase 2 and 3 will supersede the above-mentioned requirements. Phase 2 will include less restrictive measures such as increasing the total available seating to 66% while maintaining 6 feet physical distance among patrons. Phase 3 will include returning to normal operations with full seating capacity.

Sample sign which could be posted at entry and other locations:
https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/COVID-19_No_Entry.pdf

https://healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/open_sign_covid_restaurants.pdf

Screening Questions for Staff or Visitors