



Guidance to Licensees on Limitations of On-Sale Privileges

Guidance for the prevention of COVID-19 transmission in restaurants, bars, wineries, and breweries.

Context

On March 15, 2020, the Governor directed restaurants, bars, wineries, and breweries to contribute to the statewide effort to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. On March 16, 2020, the California Department of Public Health issued further guidance regarding this effort. In summary, this guidance indicates that some ABC licensees should close to the public and others should take various measures to reduce the risks of the virus being transmitted between customers and employees.

Specific Guidance to ABC Licensees

The Department provides the following information to ABC licensed businesses in light of the guidance from Public Health:

1. The guidance does not pertain to the exercise of non-retail privileges (e.g., manufacturing, importing, storing, distributing).
2. The guidance does not pertain to the exercise of off-sale retail privileges (e.g., liquor stores, on-sale premises with off-sale privileges, manufacturers with off-sale privileges, etc.). That said, all licensees should endeavor to minimize customers congregating within licensed premises, such as at check-outs and counters, in order to provide appropriate social distancing.
3. For any licensee with on-sale retail privileges, the guidance indicates you should cease exercising those privileges immediately. Further, you should follow the directive from Public Health to cease on-restaurant seated dining.
4. For those licensees permitted to sell food and alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises (including on-sale licenses with off-sale privileges), you should follow the specific guidance from State and local health officials. Some of that guidance is accessible through the following links:
 - [CDPH COVID-19 Updates](#)
 - [CDC COVID-19 Updates](#)
 - [Office of Governor Gavin Newsom](#)
5. For those licensees who suspend their retail privileges by following Public Health's guidance, the Department will not be considering any licensee to be in violation of the terms of its license for failing to exercise retail privileges for 15 days or longer. Ordinarily the Department would require a Rule 65 surrender, but we are not doing so until further notice.
6. Local jurisdictions may provide more strict guidelines and requirements. All licensees should adhere to local government directives.

We have received requests for guidance on many other issues, and we will be issuing that guidance as it is developed in this rapidly-evolving situation.

The Department appreciates the challenges these measures place on licensed businesses, but we are also confident that as Californians we can all work together to get through this difficult time. If you have any questions, please contact your local Department office. The Department is committed to working with all of you to keep us all safe and address the challenges we face.

For more information on COVID-19 and the industry, read the [California Department of Public Health guidance for retail food, beverage and other related service venues](#).

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATES

First Notice of Regulatory Relief

Second Notice of Regulatory Relief

Fourth Notice of Regulatory Relief

Fifth Notice of Regulatory Relief

August Temporary Fee Relief

Guidance by License Type

Frequently Asked Questions

Contact

Additional information may be obtained by contacting:

Alcoholic Beverage Control

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