

Publications

Ohio Announces Opening Dates For Restaurants and Bars

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In his regular press conference on Thursday, May 7, 2020, Governor Mike DeWine announced the first stage of Ohio's plan to reopen restaurants and bars shuttered during the coronavirus pandemic. He drew a careful distinction between seating areas, which are reopening subject to the conditions below, and open congregating areas (such as around pool tables, dartboards, or dance floors), which are **not** reopening as a part of this stage. To see the detailed order, [click here](#).

Facility Requirements and Recommendations

Outside dining service may resume on Friday, May 15, while dine-in service may resume on Thursday, May 21. Restaurants and bars will be required to maintain a socially distant floorplan, where tables must either be separated by 6 feet or by a solid barrier such as plexiglass, and post a maximum dining capacity based on that plan. Parties are currently limited to 10 or fewer individuals. All service will be tableside. However, buffet or salad bar service is permitted if served by staff and safe social distancing may be maintained at all times. All self-service items on tables, such as straws and condiments, must be removed and provided in temporary containers with each meal. Restaurants must conduct daily cleaning of their entire establishment, and must also thoroughly clean tabletops, chairs, and menus between seatings. High-touch areas, such as doorknobs, must be cleaned every two hours or more frequently as needed.

Restaurants are required to post a list of coronavirus symptoms at each entryway.

It is recommended, but not required, that restaurants provide touchless, separate entrances and exits. Restaurants are also encouraged to utilize mobile payment and ordering if possible.

Customer Requirements and Recommendations

Customers must be asked to refrain from entering the restaurant should they be exhibiting any symptoms of coronavirus infection.

Customers waiting for a table may be asked to wait in their cars or in a designated queuing area, maintaining safe social distancing as required. Restaurants may choose, at their discretion, to require customers to wear masks.

Employee Requirements and Recommendations

The same social distancing requirements apply to employees (6 feet between employees and barriers when not possible). A kitchen floor plan adhering to these safe social distancing guidelines must be posted. Restaurants must require their employees to conduct daily symptom checks and remain home if symptomatic. Employees will be required to wear masks, with limited exceptions based upon commonsense safety precautions. An example given at the press conference was that an employee cooking over an open flame would not be required to wear a mask due to the risk of it catching fire. Employees are not required to wear gloves beyond what is already required by applicable law. Employees are required to regularly wash their hands. ServSafe or another approved COVID-19-related education program should be provided to staff as soon as possible. Employee health agreements need to be updated to include COVID-19 symptoms.

Restaurants are encouraged, as rehiring begins, to utilize telephonic and virtual interviewing and on-boarding.

Additional Information

A copy of Ohio's requirements and suggested best practices is available [here](#).

In that same press conference, Governor DeWine announced guidelines for the reopening of hair salons, day spas, nail salons, barbershops, and tanning facilities. To see our *Client Alert* on this order, [click here](#).

Vorys is carefully monitoring all states' ongoing efforts to reopen restaurants and bars. Should you have any questions about navigating Ohio's or any other state's rapidly changing requirements, contact your Vorys lawyer. We also plan to include information regarding restaurants reopening on our weekly COVID-19 webinar. You can register for the webinar [here](#).

In addition, Vorys has created and is offering Return-to-Work tool kits for companies, which include developing an appropriate reopening strategy, template protocols, a reopening considerations checklist, and access to Vorys attorneys for counseling and customization. If you are interested in learning more, please email covid19@vorys.com.

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Vorys COVID-19 Task Force

Outside of this new law, employers continue to face myriad issues as COVID-19 continues to spread and impact communities and workplaces (some of these issues are addressed in our prior alerts [located here](#)). We will continue to keep you posted on any important developments.

We have also established a comprehensive Coronavirus Task Force, which includes attorneys with deep experience in the niche disciplines that we have been and expect to continue receiving questions regarding coronavirus. Learn more and see the latest updates from the task force at vorys.com/coronavirus.