

Closure of Indoor Bar Areas in Response to Rise in Positive COVID-19 Cases

Minneapolis has a higher rate of positive COVID-19 cases reported per 100,000 population than in the State of Minnesota, 9 Minneapolis bars have met the threshold for general outbreak among patrons. Considering these findings and to decrease further risk of transmission, on Wednesday, July 29, 2020, Mayor Frey signed Emergency Regulation 2020-17 ordering the closure of indoor bar areas within restaurants, nightclubs, and indoor spaces of entertainment to limit the risk of patrons congregating. Seated service will be allowable, as long as food and/or beverage services are delivered tableside while patrons are seated and provided that all spacing and capacity limitations set in State of Minnesota [Executive Order 20-74](#) are followed. Emergency Regulation 2020-17 goes into effect on Saturday, August 1, 2020, at 5 P.M.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are patrons allowed to stand and congregate in outdoor spaces?

No, all service must occur tableside and all patrons must be seated for the duration of their visit. Ordering of food and/or beverages must be done from the table by a server or other means, such as through an app or mobile device. The food and/or beverages will be brought out to the seated party. Food and beverages may not be ordered from a bar service area.

Can patrons order just drinks without ordering food?

Yes, as per current practice for the individual establishments and their licensure.

Can patrons order from the bar and then go find a place to sit?

No, patrons need to be seated at a table for the duration of their stay, including ordering and receipt of the food and/or beverages. Tableside service is required. Counter service is not allowed although workers may prepare drinks, enter orders and station orders for servers to collect and deliver tableside.

My establishment has high top tables. Will patrons be allowed to use these spaces?

Establishments may continue to use high top tables if these tables, have a seat for each person with a maximum of four people per table, six if members of the same household and tables maintain six feet between parties at different tables while seated.

Bar areas that can be converted for seated service will be allowed if food and/or beverage services are provided tableside while patrons are seated, and all spacing and capacity guidance allowable under the current phase of reopening are followed.

What services are allowed in outdoor spaces?

Outdoor spaces may continue to operate in either their current configuration or in an expanded premise using the COVID Temporary Outdoor Expansion Application. Regulations as per this order are to be followed. All patrons must be seated and served at a booth or table with a maximum of four people per table, six if members of the same household.

How do you define a bar area?

A bar area means one (1) or more spaces in an establishment that is designed and utilized primarily for the consumption of alcohol or for providing entertainment. This space would include, and is not limited to, a dance floor area, a stage, a game room or any space that is undefined or does not provide for seated food service. Considerations may be made for outdoor sporting courts such as bocce, volleyball or similar features.

What is an Indoor Space of Entertainment?

An indoor space of entertainment means any privately owned place wherein entertainment is offered or given to the public, whether or not a fee is charged for admission and whether or not sales of goods or property are made upon the premises, places licensed for on-sale beer, wine or liquor, food establishments licensed as a restaurant or food manufacturer which provide entertainment to the general public.

Emergency Regulation 2020-17 addresses nightclubs. What about bars and taverns?

Bars, taverns, cocktail lounges and other similar uses where an establishment is engaged in the sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption fit the definition of a nightclub. Seated table-service dining restaurants are excluded from the definition of a nightclub.

Where do food halls fit into the bar area closure?

A food hall may continue to operate provided that the bar area is closed from patron access, beverages are purchased and delivered to tableside locations where patrons are seated. Patrons may wait in line to retrieve their food from designated food vendors as long as the wait lines are properly spaced, and occupancy is managed.

Is there a plan for affected businesses to receive a refund on their license fees?

In alignment with budget discussions, the City is exploring options for a rebate on 2021 license fees for businesses impacted and ordered to close due to the state of local emergency. As details come available, staff will communicate what, if any, rebate opportunities exist.

We are under no illusion that a one-sized solution fits all businesses. Each situation, each business model is unique. Later this week, we will host a webinar to help businesses navigate through the change ahead of the emergency regulation going into effect. This is a great opportunity to ask questions on how the new regulation impacts your business.

Alternatively, you may contact your Area License Inspector who can help you navigate through the new requirement for your situation.

If you are unsure of who this might be or do not have contact information, contact Minneapolis 311 or Licenses and Consumer Services directly at 612.673.2080 or email businesslicenses@minneapolismn.gov. When leaving a voicemail, please provide the business name and address to help connect you with the appropriate inspector to expedite the response.