



Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
Nathaniel Smith, MD, MPH, Secretary of Health

Effective date: May 26, 2020

Phase 2 Revision Effective: June 15, 2020

Modified November 9, 2020 to match Restaurant Dine-in directive r.e self-service/buffets

Changed from Directive to Guidance: February 26, 2021

Revision converting mask requirement to guidance, effective April 1, 2021

Guidance for 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. **Community spread of COVID-19 remains active within the State. Therefore, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) makes the following recommendations for how to best prevent transmission of COVID-19 in bars, clubs, and other similar establishments.** Bars housed within restaurants are addressed in the updated guidance on [Restaurant Dine-in Operations](#).

- Capacity of the venue should not exceed the ability of attendees to maintain six (6) feet physical distance.
- Seating should be adjusted to maintain six (6) feet between occupied seats at adjacent tables. Seating at the bar should maintain six feet of physical distancing between individuals.
- Reservations should be encouraged when practical. If reservations are not made, physical distancing should be maintained when customers are waiting to be seated.
- Staff and patrons should wear face coverings in accordance with the [Face Coverings Guidance](#). This guidance recommends face coverings at all times, except for persons consuming food or drink.
 - All staff who come in contact with patrons should wear a face covering that completely covers their nose and mouth. Staff in the cooking or food preparation areas should wear a face covering unless doing so inhibits their ability to safely perform their job duty due to extreme heat or open flame.
 - Patrons should wear a face covering while in the establishment when physical distancing of 6 feet cannot be ensured. This is most likely in entry or waiting areas, while walking to a seat, visiting the restroom, etc. As before, face coverings may be removed when food or drink arrives.
- Gloves used during food preparation should be worn in accordance with the

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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.

- All staff should be screened daily before entering the facility. Any employee with a cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath should be immediately excluded from the facility.
- Signage should 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 should 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 should not exceed 10 people.
- Use of multi-customer containers of bar snacks (pretzels, peanuts, etc.) are strongly discouraged. Self-service operations, including without limitation, buffets and condiment bars should operate in accordance within the Guidelines for Resuming Restaurant Dine-In Operations
- 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, should 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 must 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 should be removed from public access and provided only upon request.
- Entertainment operations within bars (such as live music or entertainment dancers, in-seat gaming, or arcades) are permitted. Entertainment involving performers, such as live musicians, singers or dancers, should follow these requirements:
 - The performers or players should be separated from the audience by at least twelve (12) feet.
 - Performers or players should follow the Guidelines for Community and School Sponsored Music and Theater.
- Dancing by patrons is not recommended 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 should be disinfected frequently based on customer volume.
- Service may be declined to patrons who are not wearing a face covering.

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](#)