

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

April 27, 2020

Health Department Clarifies Restaurant Reopenings for Both Owners and Patrons

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department would like to insure that both local restaurants and consumers have the information they need to navigate safely the reopening of Hamilton County restaurants. The Health Department is following the recommendations provided by Tennessee Governor Bill Lee and supported by Hamilton County Jim Coppinger.

“We know the reopening of restaurants is of great interest not only to our local owners and food industry workers, but also to residents who want to patronize these establishments,” says Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes, “But we can’t stress enough that reopening doesn’t mean the pandemic is over. We strongly urge everyone to continue practicing social distancing, everyday actions, and adhere to these restaurant guidelines to prevent an increase in COVID-19 infections.”

Governor Lee’s [Executive Order 29](#) (EO-29) went into effect Monday, April 27, 2020 at 12:01AM, and is the guiding document for the reopening of restaurants. It amends certain portions of [Executive Order 17](#), specifically the portions that prohibited dine-in services and allowed only take-out services. The EO-29 amendment now allows dine-in services with restrictions. Limited service establishments, bars, nightclubs, and similar establishments will continue to be prohibited to offer eating or drinking onsite. All other restaurants are expected to operate in accordance with the guidance and measures issued by the Governor’s Economic Recovery Group (ERG), which are as follows:

Protecting Employees

- Wear face coverings and gloves
- Report any symptoms of illness to supervisor
- Follow daily sanitation protocols

Protecting Customers

- Limit occupancy to 50% of seating capacity
- Space tables 6 feet apart
- Limit seating to 6 per table
- Use social distancing standards in waiting areas
- Keep bar areas closed
- No live music
- Screen customers with basic questions about COVID-19 symptoms

Business Operations (applicable to all restaurants)

- Sanitize all front-of-house contact surfaces every two hours
- Use disposable menus or sanitize menus between each use
- Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins
- Sanitize chairs and all tabletop items after each table turn
- Do not offer self-serve buffets, shared condiments, or beverage station re-use
- Provide ServSafeCOVID-19 training for all food handlers

More detailed guidance for restaurants can be found from the [TN Governor’s Office here](#).

Alcohol take-out and delivery remains unaffected by EO-29.

The Health Department’s Environmental Health Services division will continue to respond to specific complaints about restaurants and to foodborne outbreaks. The Environmental Health Services division is available to restaurant owners and managers for consultation and guidance and can be reached through the COVID-19 hotline at 209-8383.

The Health Department’s COVID-19 hotline is available for anyone with questions or concerns at 209-8383.

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