



Greene County Public Health

Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, RS, Health Commissioner
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Closure of Restaurants and Bars

On March 15, 2020, Amy Acton, MD, MPH, Director of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), ordered the closure of all restaurants and bars effective at 9:00 p.m. The intent behind this order is to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the State of Ohio, prohibit mass gatherings (50 persons or less) and to protect the health of food employees as well as patrons. To that end, the following requirements and exemptions apply:

- Food and beverage sales are restricted to carry-out sales and delivery only. **No on-site consumption is permitted, including outdoor seating.** Food may be purchased via drive-thru windows, pick-up, carry-out sales;
- Lines for carry-outs in establishments must create an environment where patrons and staff maintain social distancing (six (6)-feet away from other people) whenever possible;
- Everyone is urged to continue washing hands, using hand sanitizer and practicing proper respiratory etiquette (coughing into your elbow, etc.); and,
- This order does not apply to and/or exempts food service in health care facilities and catering at weddings or funerals.

Additionally, the ODH and Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) are recommending that salad bars and buffets in food service operations and retail food establishments be closed until further notice. This also includes hotels that have buffets, breakfast bars, etc. Hotel food kitchens can serve food for individual takeout, delivery or room service only. Patrons are not permitted to eat in the dedicated communal dining areas – they will need to take the food back to their hotel rooms. Various retail food establishments (e.g. – grocery stores, gas stations, etc.), which are not closed by these orders, also have salad bars/self-service stations (e.g. – hot dogs, self-serve beverages, etc.). Therefore, ODH is recommending that all such salad bars/buffets/self-serve stations be closed until further notice.

While food operations are switching their operations to drive-thru/delivery/carry-out sales only, food employees can still be at risk. Included with this packet of information is a Coronavirus Food Service Guidance document that you are encouraged to post in your food operation. It is also recommended during this intervening time that this opportunity be used to perform a deep cleaning of your food operation. This will go a long way towards preparing for when the closure orders are lifted, and full-service operations can resume.

We have received questions regarding what products may be used for cleaning and disinfecting food operations. Attached a list of the EPA-registered disinfectant products that have been qualified under EPA's emerging viral pathogen program for use against the SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Additionally, attached are documents that you will hopefully find useful for the continued operation of your food business, as well as for the protection of your employees. These documents include: Enhanced Cleaning & Sanitizing Efforts, Touchpoint Disinfection Checklist, Disease Prevention, Promote Proper Handwashing, Food pantries for food donations, COVID-19 Food Service Guidance, Bar/Restaurant flyer, and list of Novel Coronavirus Fighting Products. Please utilize these guidance documents to assist you.

Lastly, we are here to assist you and work together with you during this difficult situation. As you have questions, please contact us and we will assist you. Thank-you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

J. Richard Schairbaum, MS, RS
Public Health Sanitarian Program Manager
Greene County Public Health