



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 16, 2020

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**CITY OF CHICAGO ISSUES GUIDANCE AND SUPPORTS FOR COVID-19  
RESTRICTIONS ON RESTAURANT DINING AND TAVERNS**

*Statewide mandate will be enforced to ensure social distancing in response to COVID-19 outbreak; delivery, drive-thru and immediate carry-out will still be permitted*

**CHICAGO** – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Rosa Escareno today issued guidance for restaurants and bars to comply with Governor Pritzker’s order to close taverns and restrict onsite consumption of food or beverage to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Beginning at 9 p.m. tonight, March 16<sup>th</sup> and lasting through March 30<sup>th</sup>, all restaurants and taverns in the state of Illinois must cease their regular operations. Restaurants and bars in the City of Chicago are required to follow the following updated guidelines, with the City beginning any necessary enforcement measures at midnight tonight:

- The consumption of food or beverage is not permitted inside a restaurant or bar
- Congregation of any kind is not permitted inside or outside a restaurant or bar
- Drive-thru, delivery and carry out or curbside pick-up may continue, with the restaurant owner responsible to ensure social distancing policies are in place and followed.

“We know this isn’t business as usual, but we must do everything we can to safeguard the health and safety of the citizens, and that requires this drastic but urgent action,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “I am committed to doing everything possible to ensure that businesses are able to comply with the new regulations and that operations continue in a healthy and safe manner.”

Customers may enter restaurants to order food and immediately leave upon receiving the food. BACP has put together an [FAQ document](#) with answers to the many questions facing business owners and consumers. The following establishments are included in the mandated restaurant and bar closure order:



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



- Concession stands at movie theaters, bowling alleys and other entertainment venues
- Cafes, coffee bars, ice cream counters and other concession areas within grocery stores
- Coffee shops and cafes

“I know these restrictions are a heavy burden on our restaurant community,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “We feel your pain and will work with you to share updated guidance, address concerns and answer questions. However, we will also be enforcing these new restrictions. Now is the time for our community to come together for the sake of our health.”

All year-round sidewalk cafes, covered or not, should also be closed as part of this order. Food Trucks, bakeries and grocery stores can continue operations, provided that there is no on-site consumption. Concessions at O’Hare and Midway Airports are exempt from the new restrictions in order to ensure food availability for travelers. However, the Chicago Department of Aviation is taking social distancing steps to keep the traveling public and airport employees safe.

“Public safety is the number one concern of the Illinois Restaurant Association,” said Sam Toia, President & CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association. “We are working around the clock with the city of Chicago, state and federal officials to provide immediate relief and guidance to employees and employers in the hospitality industry across Illinois.”

BACP is working closely with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) to [communicate](#) regularly with the business community during this evolving situation.

“I want to thank Chicago’s business owners and entrepreneurs for not only their patience but most importantly, their cooperation to follow these new public health measures during this difficult time,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “Though this is an ongoing situation, we want everyone to know that our teams prepare year-round for events like this and we will continue to do everything that’s needed to keep all of Chicago safe, healthy and secure.”

To support the community, BACP has created a [webpage](#) with resources for businesses, consumers and employees. BACP is working closely with federal partners to ensure local businesses can take advantage of federal assistance programs, including the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan Fund. This page will be updated regularly throughout the ongoing situation.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

---



Last week, Mayor Lightfoot joined Grubhub to announce it is temporarily suspending collection of up to \$100 million in commission payments from impacted independent restaurants nationwide as part of a practical measure to support small businesses and employees that utilize their delivery service.

More information and updates on COVID-19 can be found on the IDPH website, the CDPH website, and the CDC website. You can also contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at 312-746-4835 or [coronavirus@chicago.gov](mailto:coronavirus@chicago.gov).

###