



**Illinois  
Department of Commerce  
& Economic Opportunity**  
JB Pritzker, Governor



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**STATE OF ILLINOIS UPDATES SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR RESTAURANTS AND BAR  
ESTABLISHMENTS TO PROTECT PATRONS AND WORKERS FROM COVID-19**

*To further prevent spread, face coverings use will be required during interactions with wait staff and food service workers*

CHICAGO—The State of Illinois today announced revised guidelines for restaurants and bar establishments statewide to operate safely and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on a recent increase in cases, these latest guidelines will require patrons to wear a mask during any interaction with wait staff, food service workers and other employees at bars and restaurants. Face coverings must be worn over the nose and mouth when patrons are approached and served by staff, including but not limited to when employees take patrons orders, deliver food and beverages, and service tables. This guidance will also apply to other facilities with food services areas that are currently subject to the Restore Illinois guidance, such as indoor recreational facilities, museums and entertainment venues.

New guidelines go into effect Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup> and will require face coverings to be worn both in indoor and outdoor dining settings in all eleven regions in the state. Full guidelines may be found on the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) [website](#).

“Illinois residents continue to take important steps to protect the safety of our loved ones and neighbors. However, due to a recent uptick in cases, we must take additional precautionary steps when we are out in public,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Based on conversations and input from industry and business leaders, the State of Illinois is implementing updated guidelines which will allow restaurants and bars across the state to stay open while helping protect the health and safety of patrons and staff.”

The revised guidelines announced today build on both the statewide Restore Illinois guidelines as well as the tiered mitigation strategies that are implemented when a region sees consistent increased test positivity or hospital admissions. The latest data on regional test positivity and hospitals can be found on the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) [website](#). More information about the Restore Illinois guidelines and tiered mitigation measures can be found on the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) [website](#).

“Going out for food and drinks should not be a reason or an excuse to let our guards down in the fight against COVID-19,” **said Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of IDPH**. “IDPH and DCEO are updating current guidance to make it clear that face coverings should be worn in any situation where we are

interacting with those outside of our immediate circles. We will continue to adapt our guidelines and institute additional precautions to help protect all residents that make up our communities.”

Patrons are currently required to wear a mask whenever on premises, except while eating and drinking at the table or bar. The new guidelines ensure that while seated, interactions between business staff and patrons can happen safely to prevent possible spread of the virus.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has worked with industry leaders, who have requested heightened measures to protect the safety of workers in light of the recent increase in cases, and to further reduce the risk of spread that could harm business operations.

“From the beginning, DCEO has worked closely with our colleagues at IDPH as well as industry leaders to create guidance that business owners can implement and use to keep employees and customers safe, and that will ultimately help guide the reopening of our economy,” **said DCEO Acting Director Michael Negron.** “In partnership with industry leadership at IRA and employee protection organizations representing hospitality staff across the state, our latest guidelines will put the health and safety of our hospitality industry employees first and allow consumers to have confidence that Illinois bars and dining establishments are taking all precautions to allow a safer experience.”

“The state's updated guidelines for face coverings reinforce the message our Association has been driving home for months - 'Covered Faces Keep Open Places,'" **said Sam Toia, President & CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association.** "Face coverings will protect both diners and team members during this critical time. If we want to stay on a steady path with reopening, it is up to every individual to work collectively toward this common goal."

Phase 4 regulations remain in effect in ten out of the eleven regions across the state. Currently, bars and restaurants remain open with capacity restrictions to allow for social distancing – with seated parties of 10 or less, tables spaced 6-feet apart, and standing areas at no more than 25 percent capacity indoors. Region four is currently operating under increased mitigations following a sharp increase in its COVID-19 positivity rate, and Region seven will soon institute additional mitigation measures to take effect Wednesday August 26 in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“On behalf of the thousands of restaurant workers that we serve in Illinois and across the country, we strongly support Gov. JB Pritzker’s initiative to enforce restaurant guidance during this unprecedented public health crisis. This is significantly critical for the safety and health of our restaurant workers and customers—and the gateway for workers to get their jobs back and revive the economy,” **said Sekou Siby, president and CEO of the Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United.** “The restaurant industry employs nearly 14 million workers or 10% of the entire U.S. workforce. This updated guidance, which can be a model for other states, underscores the need for a vital policy on how restaurant businesses should reopen safely, equitably and responsibly.”

To assist bars and restaurants with implementing new safety measures, DCEO has provided an updated industry toolkit on their [website](#). The toolkit provides revised health guidelines materials, including new signage that may be displayed at restaurants and bars to encourage compliance.

Governor Pritzker’s Restore Illinois plan is a phased, data-driven approach to reopening the state. Illinois is currently in Phase 4 of the reopening plan, with recent updates made to create 11 public health regions and allow Illinois to introduce additional mitigations to fight against a resurgence in

our state. From the beginning, Restore Illinois has contemplated changes to guidance as progress is made, or as public health data suggests increasing rapid spread. DCEO has worked with IDPH to develop extensive public health guidelines since May, providing information and resources to help protect businesses and communities in reopening safely. For more on industry guidelines, visit DCEO's website at <https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois>.

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