

Guidance for Licensees in All Counties (11th update)

On May 27, 2020, the Governor's office issued additional guidance as part of its ongoing response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. This additional guidance included the designation of several counties as green counties, effective May 29, 2020; previously, all counties had been designated as red or yellow counties. The Governor's office also provided some additional guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry, which it updated on June 10 and June 17, 2020.

On July 15, 2020, the Governor issued an [additional order directing targeted mitigation measures \(July 15th Order\)](#) and again updated its additional guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry. On July 17, 2020, the Department of Health provided additional guidance, which was updated on September 9, 2020. On September 8, 2020, the Governor [announced](#) that restaurants that certify that they are complying with all public health safety guidelines and orders may increase indoor capacity to 50%, starting September 21, 2020. [Frequently asked questions and answers](#) about the [self-certification program](#) were provided and most recently updated on November 23, 2020. In addition, by [order effective September 21, 2020](#), all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must cease at 11:00 p.m., regardless of whether the licensee chooses to self-certify, and no patrons may possess alcohol after midnight. On October 6, 2020, the Governor issued an additional order ([October 6th Order](#)), amending the [July 15th Order](#) and updating the [FAQs](#) dealing with the Governor's July 15th and October 6th orders. On November 23, 2020, the Governor issued an additional order ([November 23rd Order](#)), which became effective at 12:01 a.m. on November 27, 2020. The [additional guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) was further updated on November 23, 2020.

On December 10, 2020, the Governor and Secretary of Health Levine issued limited-time mitigation orders ([December 10th Order](#) and [Secretary Levine's Order](#), respectively), effective at 12:01 a.m. on December 12, 2020 through 8:00 a.m. on January 4, 2021. Also, the Governor and Secretary Levine provided [FAQs](#) addressing the orders.

On December 30, 2020, the Governor [announced](#) that the time-limited mitigation orders put in place on December 12, 2020, expire at 8 a.m. on January 4, 2021. Therefore, at 8 a.m. on January 4, 2021, the Governor's mitigation efforts reverted back to the mitigation orders in place on December 11, 2020 (i.e., [November 23rd Order](#)).

On March 1, 2021, the Governor issued an additional order ([March 1, 2021 Order](#)) effective immediately, amending the [November 23rd Order](#). Also, the [FAQs](#) were updated to reflect the [March 1, 2021 Order](#).

On April 1, 2021, the Governor and Acting Secretary of Health Beam issued additional orders ([April 1, 2021 Order](#) and [Acting Secretary Beam's Order](#), respectively), effective at 12:01 a.m.

on April 4, 2021. Also, the Governor and Acting Secretary Beam provided updated [FAQs](#) addressing the orders. Further, the [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) was updated on April 1, 2021.

On May 13, 2021, the Governor and Acting Secretary of Health Beam issued additional orders ([May 13, 2021 Order](#) and [Acting Secretary Beam's Order](#), respectively), effective at 12:01 a.m. on May 17, 2021.

The following information supplements such direction for licenses in all counties.

Indoor Seating for Restaurant, Retail Dispenser and Hotel Licensees

Indoor seating in all counties is allowed but not required for restaurant, retail dispenser and hotel licensees. Seating is subject to maximum occupancy limits to be determined by using the most restrictive number when comparing Method 1 against Method 2 in the Governor's [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#). The percentage to be used will depend on whether the licensee has chosen to self-certify that they are complying with all public health safety guidelines and orders. Under Method 1, for those who will not be self-certifying, if there is a known fire code capacity number, the licensee should calculate 50% of that number and compare the result against the number in Method 2. For those licensees that choose to self-certify, the licensee should calculate 75% of the known fire code capacity number and compare the result against the number in Method 2.

Under Method 2, a licensee is limited to the maximum number of customers that can be accommodated when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a customer at another table in any direction. Also, physical barriers may be utilized in lieu of social distancing; however, the occupancy rates (50% or 75%) may not be exceeded as a result of any installed partitions.

Further, the [May 13, 2021 Order](#) provides new limits for discrete indoor and outdoor events. To calculate the maximum number of people who may attend an event, you must first calculate the maximum occupancy. The maximum occupancy is a percentage of the fire code capacity number as set forth below; if there is no known fire code capacity number, the licensee can calculate the maximum occupancy by multiplying each 1,000 square feet of space available by 67 ($67 \times (\text{square feet} / 1000) = \text{maximum occupancy}$). After identifying the maximum occupancy, the following would be utilized to calculate the allowable number of people who may attend a discrete event (hereinafter referred to as "MAE," for "may attend event"):

- For indoor events, multiply the maximum occupancy by 50% (0.50).
- For outdoor events, multiply the maximum occupancy by 75% (0.75).

The [May 13, 2021 Order](#) also provides the following requirements for hosting discrete events:

- For all events or gatherings, implement best practices such as hygiene stations, and require attendees and workers to wear masks or face coverings in compliance with the [Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#), including any subsequent amendments.

Please note that during discrete events, a licensee's total number of patrons (i.e. persons attending events and other persons patronizing the licensee's establishment) cannot exceed the licensee's total maximum occupancy (utilizing the more restrictive value calculated by Method 1 and Method 2) for its entire building.

A discrete event is defined in the [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) as:

a temporary grouping of individuals for defined purposes, that takes place over a limited timeframe, such as hours or days. For example, events and gatherings include fairs, festivals, concerts, or shows and groupings that occur within larger, more permanent businesses, such as shows or performances within amusement parks, individual showings of movies on a single screen/auditorium within a multiplex, business meetings or conferences, or each party or reception within a multi-room venue.

When calculating the number of persons attending a discrete indoor event, employees providing services for the event and directly interacting with guests – such as waiters and bartenders – must be included in the count; employees not directly interacting with guests – such as cooks in a separate kitchen – are not counted.

Examples for calculating capacity are offered below.

Example 1 (When fire code capacity is known under Method 1): Under Method 1, you have a known fire code capacity of 40 persons and are not self-certifying. Therefore, you are limited to 50% capacity, which is 20 persons (50% of 40). Under Method 2, when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a customer at another table, it is determined that you can accommodate 30 persons. Because 20 persons under Method 1 is more restrictive than 30 persons under Method 2, the maximum occupancy limit that must be followed is 20 persons.

Conversely, if you are self-certifying, you are limited to 75% capacity. Therefore, under example 1, the maximum occupancy limit that must be followed is 30 persons (75% of 40).

Example 2 (Involving a large discrete event): A wedding party wishes to rent a large licensed hall for a reception. Two waiters will be serving the guests, along with three cooks in a separate kitchen. You are self-certifying. Under Method 1, the hall has a known fire code capacity of 540 persons, 75% of which is 405 persons. Under Method 2, when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a

customer at another table, it is determined that you can accommodate 300 persons. Under MAE, the hall has a known fire code capacity of 540 persons (maximum occupancy), 50% of which is 270 persons. Therefore, even though 405 persons could attend under Method 1 and 300 persons could attend under Method 2, the limit of 270 persons utilizing MAE would apply, which in this case means 268 guests plus two waitstaff.

Conversely, if you are not self-certifying, you are limited to 50% indoor capacity. Therefore, under example 2, if you are not self-certifying, the limit of 270 persons (Method 1 (270) and MAE limit (270)) must be followed because this is more restrictive than Method 2 (300 persons).

Example 3 (Involving a discrete event being held while licensee is still open for normal business): Your licensed building consists of two rooms that are available to the public. Your licensed building has a known fire code capacity of 200 persons with each room having a known fire code capacity of 100 persons. A wedding party wishes to rent one of your rooms for a reception. Two waiters will be serving the guests, along with three cooks in a separate kitchen. You are self-certifying.

Under Method 1, the rented room has a known fire code capacity of 100 persons, 75% of which is 75 persons. Under Method 2, when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a customer at another table, the rented room can accommodate 51 persons. Under MAE, the rented room has a known fire code capacity of 100 persons (maximum occupancy), 50% of which is 50 persons. Therefore, even though 75 persons could attend under Method 1 and 51 persons could attend under Method 2, the limit of 50 persons utilizing MAE would apply, which in this case means 48 guests plus two waitstaff.

In addition, since you are open for normal business during the discrete event, your total number of patrons (i.e. persons attending event and other persons patronizing the licensee's establishment) cannot exceed your total maximum occupancy (utilizing the more restrictive value calculated by Method 1 and Method 2) for your entire building. Under Method 1, the licensed building has a known fire code capacity of 200 persons, 75% of which is 150 persons. Under Method 2, when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a customer at another table, the building can accommodate 125 persons. Therefore, since Method 2 is more restrictive than Method 1, you must ensure that the total number of persons at your licensed premises during the event does not exceed 125 persons; this total includes the persons attending the event and other persons patronizing your establishment during the event.

Please note that certain licensees – such as holders of Performing Arts Facility licenses – may only provide alcohol before, during and after a performance. While such entities may seek self-certification, the limit calculated using MAE for a discrete event must also be followed and will likely be the determining factor in establishing maximum occupancy.

The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption are only permissible as part of a larger transaction that includes a meal purchase. However, please note that retail licensees should still have food available for patrons. Further, the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m. and bar service of food and alcohol is now permitted, as long as the patrons are seated.

Sales of beer-to-go, [mixed-drinks-to-go](#) and wine-to-go may continue for those licensees eligible to make such sales. As a reminder, beer-to-go sales must end by 2:00 a.m., mixed-drinks-to-go sales must end at 11:00 p.m. and wine-to-go sales by holders of wine expanded permits must end by 11:00 p.m.

In addition to the seating and food requirements set forth above, all additional restrictions in the [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) and the [guidance on the targeted mitigation efforts](#) must be adhered to. These restrictions include:

- All customers and groups of customers must be at least six feet away from each other or be separated by physical barriers.
- Allow no more than 10 people at a table, unless they are a family from the same household.
- Customers must wear masks while entering, exiting and traveling through the premises, unless the customer has a medical condition which prevents them from wearing one; children under the age of two years do not have to wear masks. Masks can be removed while the customers are seated.

If live music is being provided, then the musicians must be at least six feet away from the customers; all existing restrictions on entertainment (the need for an amusement permit, no amplified sound beyond the property line unless the municipality has opted out of the Liquor Code statute on noise, etc.) remain.

Finally, the Governor's office's [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) specifically notes that licensees are encouraged but not required to close or remove amenities and congregate areas non-essential to the preparation and service of food or beverages such as dance floors, game areas, playgrounds, small games of chance and tavern gaming, etc.

Outdoor Seating for Restaurant, Retail Dispenser and Hotel Licensees

Outside seating in both licensed and unlicensed locations is permitted. The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) provides that a licensee is limited to the maximum number of customers that can be accommodated when tables are arranged so that no customer at one table is less than six feet away from a customer at another table in any direction. Further, partitions in lieu of social distancing requirements are not allowed for outside dining and guests must be seated to be

served. Additionally, as discussed above for indoor seating, there are limits for discrete outdoor events.

If the outside area is licensed, then service of food and alcohol there is permitted. The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption are only permissible as part of a larger transaction that includes a meal purchase. However, please note that retail licensees should still have food available for patrons. Further, the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m.

Sales of beer-to-go, [mixed-drinks-to-go](#) and wine-to-go may continue for those licensees eligible to make such sales. As a reminder, beer-to-go sales must end by 2:00 a.m., mixed-drinks-to-go sales must end at 11:00 p.m. and wine-to-go sales by holders of wine expanded permits must end by 11:00 p.m.

Please note, as outlined in [Advisory Notice No. 26](#), that the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (“PLCB”) has adopted a procedure to expediate temporary outdoor extensions of licensed premises.

If the outside area is not licensed, then service of food is permitted, but service of alcohol is not permitted.

- However, patrons may purchase up to 192 ounces of beer to go on the licensed premises, then carry it to and consume it on the unlicensed service area.
- Further, if the licensee holds a wine expanded permit, then patrons may purchase up to 3 liters of wine on the licensed premises, then consume it on the unlicensed service area.
- Finally, if the licensee [qualifies to sell prepared beverages and mixed drinks to go](#), then a patron may purchase a prepared beverage and mixed drink of between 4 and 64 ounces in a closed container on the licensed premises, open the container once they leave the licensed premises and consume it on the unlicensed service area.

Clubs and Catering Clubs

The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption are only permissible as part of a larger transaction that includes a meal purchase. Also, the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m. Further, the occupancy limitations and social distancing limitations set forth above must be adhered to. Lastly, clubs and catering clubs cannot sell any alcohol for off-premises consumption.

If a club decides to allow members on the licensed premises, it must follow the social distancing rules set forth above for restaurant industry members, such as limiting occupancy.

As noted earlier, the Governor's office's [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#) specifically notes that licensees are encouraged but not required to close or remove amenities and congregate areas non-essential to the preparation and service of food or beverages such as dance floors, game areas, playgrounds, small games of chance and tavern gaming, etc.

Nightclubs

The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) allows businesses that meet the definition of a “nightclub” under the Clean Indoor Air Act to conduct operations, so long as the mitigation measures are employed to protect workers and patrons (see [guidance for businesses in the restaurant industry](#)). Also, the occupancy limitations and social distancing limitations set forth above must be adhered to. Please note that nightclubs cannot self-certify.

The Clear Indoor Air Act defines a nightclub as a “public hall or hall for which admission is generally charged and which is primarily or predominantly devoted to dancing or to shows or cabarets as opposed to a facility that is primarily a bar, tavern or dining facility.” Since the Liquor Code does not use the term nightclub, and since the Department of Health regulates the Clean Indoor Air Act, licensees should contact that agency if they have specific questions regarding this prohibition.

Breweries, Limited Wineries, Distilleries and Limited Distilleries

Many manufacturers – such as breweries, limited wineries, distilleries and limited distilleries – also offer food and drink for on-premises consumption. The rules applicable to restaurant, retail dispenser and hotel licensees are likewise applicable to them. Specifically, on-premises consumption of food and alcohol is permissible, so long as the occupancy limitations, social distancing limitations and the other limitations set forth above are adhered to.

The [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption are only permissible as part of a larger transaction that includes a meal purchase. However, please note that breweries should still have food available for patrons. Further, the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m. Pursuant to the Liquor Code and PLCB Regulations, please note that the on-premise alcohol sales for breweries that do not hold a brewery pub license, and distilleries and limited distilleries must end Mondays through Saturdays by midnight and Sundays by 11:00 p.m. Furthermore, the on-premise alcohol sales for breweries that hold a brewery pub license and limited wineries must end by 2:00 a.m.

Sales of beer-to-go, [mixed drinks-to-go](#) and wine-to-go may continue for those licensees eligible to make such sales. Business-to-business sales may continue as before.

Please note that refilling food and beverage containers or implements brought in by customers in is prohibited, unless the container or implement can be refilled without contact with the tap or dispenser, containers are sanitized before use or the tap or dispenser is sanitized before and after each use.

As a reminder, breweries, limited wineries, distilleries and limited distilleries may sell their own alcoholic products for off-premises consumption but may not sell alcoholic products acquired from other breweries, limited wineries, distilleries and limited distilleries to go, although such products may be sold for on-premises consumption.

Special Occasion, Off-Premises Catering, Exposition and Farmers Market Permits

Licensees are reminded that permits such as special occasion permits, off-premises catering permits, exposition permits and farmers market permits each have specific eligibility requirements and those requirements must be followed or licensees risk citation. Further, the [May 13, 2021 Order](#) provides updated limits for discrete indoor and outdoor events and the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m.

Golf Courses

[Licensees that are located at golf courses were previously informed that they may provide alcohol service to individuals playing golf.](#) Pursuant to the [April 1, 2021 Order](#), golf courses may now allow golfers to consume those alcoholic beverages in locations where people may congregate, such as picnic tables or patios, without a meal purchase. Also, the [April 1, 2021 Order](#) removed the requirement that all sales of alcohol for on-premises consumption must end by 11:00 p.m.