



## Division of Animal and Food Industry Services Food Safety Program

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### **Information for Food Establishments Operating Under Executive Order 53**

On March 23, 2020, Governor Northam issued Executive Order Fifty-Three. This statewide order went into effect at 11:59 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. The full text of the order can be found [HERE](#). This order directly affects many businesses under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) Food Safety Program. Please review the following information carefully.

### **Dining and On-Site Alcohol Establishments**

All dining and congregation areas in certain establishments must close to the public. These establishments may remain open for delivery and/or takeout services. Establishments include:

- Breweries;
- Microbreweries;
- Distilleries;
- Wineries; and
- Tasting rooms

### **Essential Retail Businesses**

The following retail businesses are considered essential and may remain open during normal business hours:

- Grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retailers that sell food and beverage products or pharmacy products, including dollar stores, and department stores with grocery or pharmacy operations
- Retail functions of gas stations and convenience stores
  - Food service may remain open, but seating areas must be closed

NOTE: These essential retail businesses must adhere to the following guidance:

- **Eliminate seating on the premises (indoors and outdoors)**
- Self-service of food from a buffet or food bar (hot/cold buffet, ice cream toppings bar, etc.) in a retail food establishment or grocery store is not allowed.
- Patrons may self-dispense drinks as surface contact and length-of-time to do so is limited, so long as the number of patrons remains 10 or fewer and they maintain social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Adhere to social distancing recommendations throughout your establishment, to the extent possible
  - Management should encourage customers waiting in line to maintain a minimum of 6 foot spacing

- Emphasize employee health and hygiene, including frequent and proper hand-washing
  - Workers, including managers, with symptoms of coughing, shortness of breath, fever, or other symptoms of illness should not return to work until they are symptom-free and cleared by a medical professional
- Enhance routine cleaning and sanitizing practices on frequently touched surfaces

*Note: Nothing in Executive Order Fifty-Three limits access to essential services for low-income residents, such as food banks.*

### **Additional Resources**

[VDACS COVID-19 Emergency Information Center](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions on Executive Order 53 \(updated regularly\)](#)

[Guidance for Food Establishments - VDH](#)

[EPA-Approved Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19](#)

[Additional Information Related to COVID-19 - VDH](#)

[CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations for Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 Cases](#)

Thank you for your cooperation regarding this important directive. As COVID-19 continues to affect our lives, let's work together to keep everyone safe.

If you have questions please email the VDACS Food Safety Program at: [foodsafety@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:foodsafety@vdacs.virginia.gov)