

As Ohio Restaurants Reopen, Gov. DeWine Warns Industry of Non-Compliance

By: James Niekamp on May 19, 2020 on graydon.law

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine [recently announced that Ohio's restaurants and bars could reopen from the COVID-19 shutdown order in two phases](#); first with outdoor dining beginning May 15, and then with indoor dining resuming the following week on May 21.

In response to reports of overcrowded patios on the first weekend of reopening, Gov. DeWine announced yesterday that the State of Ohio will be deploying law-enforcement personnel and health officials to ensure bars and restaurants abide by the state's social-distancing mandates.

Gov. DeWine also noted that restaurants can expect compliance checks as part of this ongoing effort. Restaurants found to be non-compliant can be prosecuted and, among other penalties, have their liquor licenses revoked.

Gov. DeWine indicated that this initiative will operate under the existing Ohio Department of Public Safety, the current organization which conducts inspections for new liquor permits and cites existing permit holders for infractions, such as serving patrons who are underage.

What do you need to know as an Ohio bar or restaurant owner?

- Employees and patrons must keep at least six feet away from each other at all times.
- All employees must wear facial coverings, unless otherwise exempted.
- Employees must perform daily symptom assessments.
- Employees must stay home if symptomatic and perform daily symptom assessment requirements before returning to work.
- Employees must regularly wash hands.
- Open congregate areas that are not necessary for food and beverage prep and service (i.e. pool tables, dance floors, etc.) must remain closed off.

In addition to bars and restaurants, Gov. DeWine noted that individual patrons may also potentially be cited for rule violations, for example if caught standing less than six feet from

other patrons.

For more information on the rules relating to reopening requirements for Ohio bars and restaurants, please refer to the [official guidance issued by the State of Ohio](#) as part of its Responsible RestartOhio plan.