

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State Police, Liquor Control Board Remind Licensed Liquor Establishments to Require Masks, Follow Social Distancing

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement (BLCE) and the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board (PLCB) today called on licensed liquor establishments and their patrons to abide by social distancing and masking requirements to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

On June 17, the Wolf Administration issued [updated guidance](#) for businesses in the restaurant and retail food service industry as part of the commonwealth's ongoing response to the COVID-19 public health crisis. Among other requirements, all businesses and employees in the restaurant and retail food service industry authorized to conduct in-person activities are mandated to:

- Require all customers to wear masks while entering, exiting or otherwise traveling throughout the restaurant or retail food service business (face masks may be removed while seated). Further, employees are required to wear masks at all times.
- Provide at least six feet between parties at tables or physical barriers between customers where booths are arranged back to back.
- Ensure maximum occupancy limits for indoor and outdoor areas are posted and enforced.

On June 18, the PLCB [issued guidance](#) to licensed liquor establishments choosing to resume on-premises service of alcohol counties in the yellow and green phases of reopening. The guidance incorporated and reinforced the governor's mandates, including those noted above.

"Pennsylvania's COVID-19 mitigation efforts have been among the most successful in the country in slowing the spread of this dangerous virus and allowing for the cautious reopening of restaurants and other licensed liquor establishments," said PLCB Executive Director Charlie Mooney. "Just as the PLCB requires masks for employees and customers at our Fine Wine & Good Spirits stores, licensees must remain vigilant in order to stay on the path to recovery and keep our businesses operating."

A licensee that fails to comply with requirements mandating the wearing of masks, providing at least six feet between parties at tables, and ensuring that maximum occupancy limits are observed risks citation by the BLCE. Penalties may be assessed for each violation and include a fine of up to \$1,000 and possible suspension and/or revocation of the liquor license. Continued operation in violation of the guidance after a warning or citation risks further enforcement action by BLCE and ultimately puts the liquor license at risk, both through the citation process and upon application for renewal to the PLCB. Licensees are reminded that any person who violates the Liquor Code may be charged criminally with a misdemeanor.

“Our enforcement officers have found that the vast majority of licensed liquor establishments statewide are voluntarily complying with mitigation requirements, and we remain focused on education and working with licensees during this challenging time,” said Major Jeffrey Fisher, director of the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement. “However, the commonwealth remains in the midst of a public health emergency, and serious consequences are possible for businesses that fail to take the necessary steps to keep their employees and customers safe.”

Since mid-March BLCE officers have conducted compliance checks at over 15,100 licensed liquor establishments. Officers conduct an average of 1,500 compliance checks each day and have issued 162 warnings and 103 notices of violations to date. Complaints regarding licensees not complying with COVID-19 mitigation mandates may be directed to the BLCE at 1-800-932-0602 or reported through the BLCE’s [online complaint form](#).