

PLCB Reverts to Pre-Pandemic Rules

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The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board announced Tuesday that it is [returning to nearly all of pre-pandemic regulations](#), negating the numerous waivers it enacted throughout the last 15 months to help restaurant and bar owners through perhaps the worst period of business they've collectively endured.

The reverting back to the previous regulations is directly tied to the Pennsylvania legislature last week ending Gov. Tom Wolf's emergency disaster declaration, it said in an email.

One of the biggest changes will be the end of bars and restaurants selling to-go mixed drinks. This practice was prohibited pre-pandemic by the state's alcohol regulations, but state legislators offered it as a life preserver to restaurants that could no longer have customers eat or drink in their establishments.

Another big lifeline bars and restaurants used under the emergency declaration was temporary, makeshift outdoor seating and dining areas in places such as parking lots, city streets, nearby properties, or anywhere restaurants could fit people outdoors to comply with the state's edict of limited or no indoor seating. The state even offered rapid approvals of those spaces so that bars and restaurants could get people seated and get an area set up as quickly as possible.

However, with restaurants now approved for 100% capacity, those temporary spaces established last year are no longer considered licensed areas. Any establishment with a liquor license that received approval for a temporary space of that type needs to file an application to extend their licensed premises to include those areas, along with the appropriate fee, according to the guidance. The guidance also states that a decision on to whether to allow the use of those areas while the application is pending will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The PLCB has also stopped its "safekeeping" time for active licenses. It offered safekeeping to license holders that could not stay in business, as a license must be actively in use for the holder to keep it. After a grace period of inactivity, the holder would forfeit the license. But the PLCB stopped that inactivity clock on March 6, 2020, and allowed businesses that had to close to put their liquor license into safekeeping so that it would not be forfeited. The PLCB said it will be sending notice to all who have a license in safekeeping and alerting them of the timeline to make it active once again.

The one pandemic change that won't be changing - the PLCB will not be collecting certain license fees it waived in December for 2021.

If you have any questions on how this will affect license holders throughout the state, please [contact me](#) or anyone in the [Barley Snyder Hospitality Industry Group](#).

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