



NEWS RELEASE

May 23, 2020

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El Paso County restaurant variance request approved

El Paso County, CO – El Paso County Public Health was notified late Saturday night that the restaurant variance request submitted on Monday, May 18 was approved by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

“Your application describes a robust public health system with continuing collaboration with community partners to ensure that testing capacity, epidemiological response, PPE resources, and healthcare infrastructure remain stable and sufficient to meet community needs,” said Jill Ryan, executive director for CDPHE.

The request was approved by CDPHE with the following additional requirements:

- In each confined indoor space, in order to achieve six feet of social distancing, the limit is 50 percent of the posted occupancy code limit ensuring a minimum 28 square feet per person not to exceed more than 50 people at any given time.

“Our agency is grateful for our partnerships with the Chamber & EDC and the Pikes Peak Chapter of the Colorado Restaurant Association, whose expertise helped expedite the development and quality of this variance request,” said Susan Wheelan, El Paso County Public Health Director. “We are also thankful for the efforts of the El Paso County Board of Commissioners in advocating for this proposal, and the support of local hospitals in their diligent review of the request.”

This variance request is effective immediately. For restaurants who are looking for technical assistance or guidance, call (719) 578-3167, or visit El Paso County Public Health’s website at www.elpasocountyhealth.org.

Other key takeaways from the variance request include:

Seating capacity

- All seating shall be structured so as to ensure a minimum of six feet between occupied seats at different tables.
- Groups seated together shall be limited to 10 people and must be from the same household or consistent social group.

Seating processes

- Facilities are required to take reservations. Walk-in reservations are also accepted.
- Restaurants are encouraged to record and maintain the following information for each table seated for twenty-one (21) days:
 - Name and phone number of one adult in the party
 - Table assignment
 - Seating and departure times
- If maintained, such information shall be provided to Public Health only upon request if Public Health needs to notify others of a new COVID-19 outbreak.
- Seating at bar areas is not permitted unless a minimum of six-foot distancing between staff and customers can be maintained.

Common-use items and areas

- Multiple-use condiment containers are prohibited. Only single-use items may be provided.
- Buffets may not be self-serve by customers; only plated or carry-out delivery meals provided to customers by staff are allowed. Buffets must be at least six feet from any dining tables.
- Doorknobs, counter tops, bathrooms, handles, railings, and other high-touch areas shall be cleaned and disinfected every 2 hours.

Masks

- Employees who routinely or consistently come within six feet of other employees or customers must wear a cloth face covering over their noses and mouths, unless doing so would inhibit the employee's health.
- Facilities must make every effort to provide employees with cloth face coverings.

Per CDPHE, this variance approval is granted based on the facts and circumstances today as described in the request. If the county were to have more than 715 cases in a two-week period (two-week incidence of 100 per 100,000), the variance is automatically rescinded. Additionally, CDPHE reserves the right to modify or rescind this variance approval as El Paso County Variance May 23, 2020 circumstances warrant. This approval is in effect until the final expiration of Public Health Order 20-28, which will be extended in some capacity beyond the current expiration date next week.

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