

## Alexandria Health Department Guidance for Restaurants, Bars, and Other Commercial Establishments

On March 17, Governor Northam told Virginians that all restaurants, fitness centers, and theaters are mandated to significantly reduce their capacity to 10 patrons, or close. Restaurants are encouraged to continue carry-out and takeaway options.

Alexandria Health Department (AHD) strongly encourages all restaurants to adopt the following social distancing measures. We understand the social and economic disruption that may occur as a result, but AHD and the City of Alexandria needs to continue to prioritize the health and safety of all community members—particularly our most vulnerable populations—above all else.

- Suspend the use of bar seating and suspend service to standing patrons.
- Ensure that tables (including booths) that are occupied by patrons are separated by at least six (6) feet of distance
- Limit individual table seating to six (6) persons or less – only seat persons who know each other at each table (i.e. no communal tables)
- Evaluate employees for signs of respiratory illness (fever, cough, etc.) at the beginning of each shift, and send home ill employees
- Thoroughly sanitize menus and tables between customers
- Increase vigilance of hand washing, particularly between bussing and serving food
- Place signage on entrances to encourage patrons and staff to practice proper social distancing, hand hygiene, and stay home if ill
- Use alternative greetings to handshakes such as elbow bumps and waves
- Encourage patrons to utilize takeout, delivery, or other options that don't encourage group congregation
- Encourage customers to wash their hands before eating and drinking, reduce food sharing, and consider if possible, providing hand sanitizer at tables
- If a customer is coughing or visibly ill, politely require them to leave (consider allowing them to take their food away with them)
- Depending on your floor plan and size, consider seating patrons in a staggered, timed method (while also maintain (6) six feet of distance between tables)

Restaurants and bars in Alexandria have various configurations, floor plans, and occupancy limits. Therefore, all establishments should consider their unique circumstances in determining how best to meet these recommendations to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19. There is no current evidence that COVID-19 is spread through food or food shipped from affected regions. For additional questions on how to implement these measures, contact 703.746.4910. For general COVID-19 information, call the Alexandria COVID-19 Information Line at 703.746.4988, weekdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Guidance as of 3/17/2020

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