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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES DINE-IN SERVICE TO RESUME MAY 11

On April 29, Governor Hutchinson announced that restaurants will be allowed to resume dine-in service **beginning on May 11, 2020**. Restaurant reopening will take place in three phases, and restaurants will be subject to certain requirements during the phases one and two. Phase one will allow dine-in service to resume at very limited capacity and subject to the restrictions below. Phase two will allow restaurants to operate at 66% of normal capacity, and will ease some of the phase one restrictions. Phase two will include the opening of bars and entertainment operations while maintaining 6 feet physical distance among patrons. No date for phase two has been set, and Governor Hutchinson stated that it will be determined by the data as it is analyzed. Phase three will be a return to normal operations.

Restaurant operators should carefully follow the directives and recommendations outlined by the department of health. Failure to follow the regulations could result in a government enforcement action, and/or increased civil liability to patrons or employees who become ill.

Phase one of dine-in reopening will begin on May 11, 2020. During phase one, dine-in service will be subject to the following restrictions:

- Restaurants will be limited to 33% of ordinary capacity, this includes indoor and outdoor seating;
- Groups of more than ten people are prohibited;
- Seating shall be adjusted to maintain 10-foot physical distancing between tables so occupied seats are six feet from seats at adjacent tables;
- Reservations are encouraged;
- All staff that comes in contact with patrons must wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth;
- All staff are required to wear gloves. Gloves must be changed between each customer, customer group, or task.
- Patrons must wear masks upon entrance and while in the restaurant until the food or drink is served;
- Restaurants must screen staff daily, and any employee with a cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath shall be excluded from the facility;
- Signage must be placed at the front of the restaurant to alert patrons not to enter the facility if they are sick or have symptoms such a cough, sore throat, fever, or shortness of breath;
- Restaurants must monitor frequent handwashing and prohibit bare-hand contact or ready-to-eat foods by staff;
- Pre-order where possible is encouraged
- Senior hour is encouraged
- No self-service (buffets, salad bars, condiment bars, etc.);

- Facilities with employees testing positive shall be reported to the Arkansas Department of health immediately;
- Tables, chairs, and menus must be cleaned and disinfected after each meal, along with any other frequently contacted surfaces including, but not limited to, condiment containers, napkin dispensers, salt and pepper shakers;
 - Non-food contact surfaces may be cleaned with a solution containing ½ cup of regular bleach per gallon of water followed by a five-minute contact time
 - Food contact surfaces must be sanitized in accordance with § 4-501.114 of the existing [Rules Pertaining to Retail Food Establishments](#).
- Bars and entertainment within restaurants prohibited, but alcohol may be served with meals

The full directive published by the Arkansas Department of Health may be found [here](#). For more information on this directive, and other COVID-19 related topics, please review our COVID-19 Resources page here: <https://www.gill-law.com/covid-19-resources/#>