



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New public health order requires establishments to stop serving alcohol by 9 p.m., close premises by 10 p.m.**

*Restaurants that don't serve alcohol not required to close at 10 p.m.; Carryout, delivery of food items only may continue after 10 p.m.*

**LAWRENCE** – As COVID-19 cases in Douglas County have increased, leaders of Douglas County's Education Unified Command emphasize the community is in a critical period to control the spread of the coronavirus.

A July 3 public health order closed bars in Douglas County in response to a large number of cases stemming from bar environments. In recent weeks, leaders acknowledged some ambiguity regarding definitions in the order and seeing behaviors that increased risk for exposure to COVID-19 in establishments where alcohol was consumed.

Therefore, a [new public health order](#) will take effect at 12:01 a.m., Friday, Sept. 4, requiring:

- All restaurants, bars and entertainment venues with a liquor license to cease serving alcohol at 9 p.m. and close their premises including all outside seating areas or patios to customers no later than 10 p.m.
- Establishments may conduct carryout, curbside or off-premises delivery of food only after 10 p.m. but no carryout or curbside delivery of alcohol beverages after 9 p.m.
- Restaurants that do not serve alcohol are not required to close at 10 p.m.
- Restaurants and bars serving alcohol to have patrons seated at a table with a maximum group of 10 people per table, and social distancing requirements between tables and groups of patrons observed.
- No customers standing at or congregating at a bar or counter, and all food and beverages must be consumed by patrons while seated, except for carryout services.
- Face masks need to be worn by anyone who is inside a public space or outside and unable to maintain six feet of social distance from non-household members. There are exceptions, including for children 5 or younger.
- Mass gatherings of more than 45 people are prohibited. These are instances in which individuals who don't reside together are in one location and are unable to maintain a 6-foot distance.
- An occupancy limitation of 100 people for entertainment venues, provided social distancing and face mask requirements are maintained.
- Dance floors at entertainment venues and establishments to be closed for dancing and may be repurposed for table seating.

"We believe our community has seen the effectiveness of public health orders that require masks and limit



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interactions in environments where risk for transmission of the virus is greatest. This updated order is to help businesses and the public by providing clarity on how to host and act in these environments in a smart and safe way,” said Dr. Thomas Marcellino, Douglas County’s Local Health Officer. “We have seen an increased number of positive cases with the additional testing being done by the University of Kansas. The virus is active in our community and now is the time to decrease transmission.”

In addition to the operating requirements on bars and restaurants serving alcohol, the health order keeps the county’s mask mandate in place and Douglas County aligned with Phase 3 of the Smart and Safe Reopening Douglas County plan, which was adopted on the guidelines from Gov. Laura Kelly’s reopening recommendations.

The [new order](#) will take effect at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Sept. 4.

Anyone with [questions](#) or a complaint about compliance with a public health order can email [phorders@ldchealth.org](mailto:phorders@ldchealth.org), where Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health staff will follow up on specific complaints. An intentional violation of a public health order carries a civil penalty of up to \$2,500, and the Douglas County District Attorney’s Office makes decisions on pursuing prosecution of such complaints.

“The intent of the order is clear. All establishments operating must be following proper KDHE protocols and the public health order,” Marcellino said. “Any restaurant, bar or entertainment venue found to be violating these protocols, including allowing customers to be seated at tables not six feet apart, or allowing customers to stand or gather in a location other than a table — including at a bar in the restaurant — is subject to be closed.”

Members of the public can also check [douglascountyks.org/coronavirus](http://douglascountyks.org/coronavirus) or [ldchealth.org/coronavirus](http://ldchealth.org/coronavirus) for information about COVID-19 in Douglas County.

The Douglas County Education Unified Command encompasses experts from Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Lawrence Douglas County Public Health and KU's Pandemic Medical Advisory Team, giving leaders in Education Unified Command a pathway to medical experts and science-based decisions.



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