



****3.20.2020-This document will evolve day to day, as updates are needed****

COVID-19 FAQ for Wyoming Restaurants and Lodging Establishments

As the impact of Coronavirus continues to have devastating impact across the globe, the hospitality industry is facing unprecedented challenges. Restaurants and hotels face weeks or months of deeply declining sales and many have already shut their doors—while others operate with limited sales through take out, delivery, and drive thru operations. At WLRA, we are working tirelessly to answer your questions and to advocate at all levels of government for relief to help support your employees and your businesses. We have compiled a list of common questions and answers that we hope will be helpful. However, we stand ready and eager to help our members navigate these uncharted waters during these difficult times. Please don't hesitate to contact us at info@wlra.org

Are restaurants, bar and lodging operations limited?

Yes, Governor Gordon just issued a statewide ordinance stating that restaurants will be closed to dine-in food service for two weeks, through April 3, 2020, but may remain open for curbside take-out, delivery or drive-through food service.

I have a full retail liquor license. Can I sell beer and wine to go?

Yes, you can sell unopened beer and wine to go provided you have a full retail liquor license. Please note that no other liquor license (bar and grill, restaurant liquor license, etc. allows you to sell alcohol to go.)

What are some things I can do to sustain my business if I choose to stay open?

- Companies that have delivery and takeout should focus on those services and promote them as best as they can. Focus on off-premise sales, delivery, drive-thru, and curbside pickup. Many people don't cook or don't want to cook and plenty of people, particularly essential workers, are still commuting to and from work and take lunch breaks. Grocery stores are currently experiencing product shortages and significant crowds. Restaurants have food inventory that can help feed our communities.
- Scale back menu items to streamline product usage and labor.
- Have conversations with your banks, landlords, and other vendors about ways to reduce, delay, or restructure payments to get through this period. Rent and loan payments are huge challenges for many owners and operators. Even if you choose to close your business, landlords and lenders will expect payment.

If I have to to reduce the hours of my employees or lay off employees, am I required to provide a federal WARN notice?

The WARN Act is a federal act which offers protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide notification 60 calendar days in advance of “plant closings” and “mass layoffs.” 20 C.F.R. § 639.1 It is unclear, in the case of a pandemic if the federal WARN Act applies and the WLRA cannot provide legal advice. Businesses who believe they may be required to provide WARN notices should consult with legal counsel.

Congress just passed a COVID19 FMLA and Paid Sick Leave Act, where can I find the details about this new law? When does it go into effect?

The Senate passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, an economic stimulus plan aimed at addressing the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on Americans and introducing paid sick leave and an expanded family and medical leave act to the nation’s employers. The bill was signed and will take effect April 2, 2020. You can more information about this new law here

<https://www.fisherphillips.com/resources-alerts-congress-finalizes-covid-19-coronavirus-response-act>

Are employees who are affected by COVID-19 eligible for unemployment insurance?

Employees who are separated from employment, have had their hours of employment reduced, or are prevented from working due to a medical condition caused by COVID-19 or due to communicable disease control measures, may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Employees who are quarantined or directed by a federal, state or local government authority or a medical or public health professions to remain in isolation related to COVID-19 may also eligible for unemployment insurance.

Employees can apply for unemployment insurance here <https://wyui.wyo.gov/benefits/home.do>

Will my business be eligible for assistance through the Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Assistance Program in response to the Coronavirus?

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Governor Gordon has requested that the entire state of Wyoming be designated as disaster area. Upon designation, eligible WY businesses that have been adversely impacted will be eligible to apply for assistance at sba.gov/disaster

What are other states doing with regard to restaurant closings and gatherings?

The National Restaurant Association, in partnership with other state restaurant associations across the country, has compiled a list of current state ordinances and regulations that can be found at

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1aKaaNo8cHVh9CcNHT6l8K17sRSU0nh_pB0K2N0rzv-s/edit#gid=0

What is WLRA doing to advocate for hospitality businesses during this crisis?

We hear you loud and clear that restaurants and hotels need a lifeline during this crisis that will allow employees and owners to weather the storm and be ready to spring back into action quickly. Things have been happening at warp speed, and WLRA's team is working day and night on recovery effort, advocating on behalf of hospitality businesses – with Congress, with the Governor and with our state and national partners.

In response to the pandemic, Governor Gordon has assigned Wyoming's top 5 elected officials to lead 5 different task forces to address the challenges we are and will face moving forward. State Auditor Kristi Racines will lead the Business and Financial Sector Task Force and WLRA Executive Director Chris Brown has been asked to participate. Please send ALL of your concerns, suggestions and ideas to chris@wlra.org and we will make sure that the task force considers them.

We are in contact with a number of organizations to address the needs of hospitality industry employees and businesses that are being impacted by this unprecedented event. As the landscape that our industry is operating on is changing by the day please keep a close eye on our communications for the latest information. As well please feel free to reach out to WLRA Executive Director Chris Brown directly at any time with your questions and concerns. Chris can be reached at chris@wlra.org or at 307.634.8816 x 207

Where can I find more info?

Governor Mark Gordon announced the launch of a state government webpage that will provide resources and information on the COVID-19 outbreak.

The webpage may be viewed at covid19.wyo.gov.

“We want to offer a single location to share information and resources from multiple state agencies as we respond to this pandemic,” Governor Gordon said.

The page includes links to resources and information from the Wyoming Department of Health, the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security, the Wyoming Department of Education, the University of Wyoming and the state's community colleges.

It also offers information to assist impacted businesses and workers, as well as a link to updates from the CDC

The page will be updated regularly with further resources and new information as it becomes available.