



Mac
Gipson
Administrator

William E.
Thigpen
Assistant
Administrator

Colonel Alan C.
Spencer
Board Chairman

Melissa
Morrissette
Board Member

John Knight
Board Member

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CONTACT: Dean R. Argo
(334) 213-6330

ABC Board Approves Operational Changes for Liquor License Holders

(MONTGOMERY, AL – July 27, 2020) Out of concern for the health and safety of the general public, licensees and other key stakeholders, the Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board today approved an emergency order that limits the hours of operations for restaurants, bars and other entities that sell alcohol.

Daily COVID-19 cases in the state continue to climb, with almost 3,000 new cases reported this past weekend.

“The primary mission of the Alabama ABC Board is protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens and we take this mission very seriously,” said ABC Board Chairperson Col. Alan Spencer. “We are very sensitive to the economic impact this rule will have. This is a gut-wrenching decision we are making today, but it is also gut-wrenching to see the number of Alabamians who are suffering from this disease. On balance, I am compelled to vote in favor of the rule. This will be a very short duration and will relieve this restriction as soon as possible.”

The emergency rule is effective immediately, but will not be enforced until Saturday, August 1, 2020. Beginning at 11:00 p.m. Saturday, all ABC licensees are required to cease the service and/or sale of alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. with on-premise consumption to end at 11:30 p.m.

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Many states, citing rising COVID-19 cases, already have closed bars or imposed other limits, such as banning on-premises drinking, at businesses that sell alcohol. By adopting this emergency rule, the ABC Board is ensuring customers and businesses the ability to continue operating in a semi-normal fashion by reducing the hours of on-premises alcohol service.

It is widely believed that alcohol consumption reduces Inhibitions. After consuming alcoholic beverages individuals are less likely to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines, including the wearing of masks and social distancing, potentially increasing the transmission of COVID-19.

“Our hope is that reduced hours of alcohol service will decrease social gatherings and the transmission of COVID-19,” said ABC Board Administrator Mac Gipson. “Our number one goal is to protect the public and our license holders. We believe this emergency order will reduce the exposure to and spread of COVID-19.”

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About Alabama Alcoholic Beverage Control Board:

Created by the Alabama Legislature in 1937, the Alabama ABC Board controls alcoholic beverages through distribution, licensing, enforcement and education. The Board operates 174 retail stores and licenses more than 15,000 privately-owned businesses that sell alcohol to consumers. Also, the Board conducts a school-based, anti-underage drinking awareness program – *Under Age, Under Arrest* – that has reached approximately 150,000 middle, junior high, high school and college students.