

Coronavirus Information

The Alabama ABC Board's main priority is the health and safety of our citizens. We encourage our staff, as well as all of our licensees/permittees, to follow the guidelines of the [CDC](#) and state/local public health officials in the days and weeks to come as we continue to fight the spread of the coronavirus.

The Alabama ABC Board realizes the significant impact the coronavirus pandemic is having on the alcoholic beverage industry due to restrictions placed on business, event cancellations and other measures taken to protect the public. To assist as much as we can during this difficult time, we're providing answers to common questions you may have.

If AABC has the authority to relax an agency process, and determines it is in the best interest of the public to do so, or if the Governor's Office issues an emergency proclamation, we will place those changes on this page and direct you to further guidance whenever possible.

Scroll down to see all of the FAQs or choose a topic below:

Licensing and Compliance Offices

To protect our staff and the public, our Licensing and Compliance offices will be closed to the public. Our Licensing and Compliance staff will be working remotely via telephone and e-mail and we will continue to serve the public in that manner.

Therefore, will not offer in-person appointments or walk-in meetings until further notice. Staff will continue to serve citizens by telephone and email. All applications for alcohol licenses and tobacco permits will be accepted by email only.

Questions regarding licenses, permits, applications, compliance, or any other general concerns may be [e-mailed](#) or you can reach your [local Licensing and Compliance Office](#) by phone.

Process for Temporary Electronic Submission of Applications and Permits

- Fill out the appropriate [Pre-Application Form](#).
- Compile the documents required on the [Pre-Application Checklist](#).
- [Email](#) your completed form and documents to licensing@abc.alabama.gov
- Email subject line must list the city and county where your business is located so that it may be routed to the appropriate Inspector.
- Once your application has been reviewed, the Inspector will contact you via telephone or e-mail.

Temporary Process for Complaints

Complaints may be [emailed](#) to licensing@abc.alabama.gov or you can reach your [local Licensing and Compliance Office](#) by phone. You may also contact the central office at 334-213-6300.

Temporary Changes to ABC Rules and/or Processes

Emergency Rule

The Alabama ABC Board passed an [Emergency Rule](#) on March 18, 2020 (amended on July 16, 2020).

[FAQs regarding the Emergency Rule](#)

Liquor Liability Insurance

Per ABC Rules and Regulations 20-X-5-.14 and 20-X-8-.14(c), all licensees who hold a license allowing the retail sale of alcohol must maintain liquor liability insurance at all times. Failure to do so will result in a citation, or possibly suspension of the ABC license.

Due to the Order from the State Health Officer temporarily prohibiting on-premises service, some of our retail licensees have chosen to fully close their doors temporarily. If you have chosen to close temporarily, you may cancel your liquor liability insurance provided that you receive approval from the ABC Licensing and Compliance Division and obtain liquor liability before you re-open the business or make any sales of alcohol.

To request approval for liquor liability cancellation, send an [email](#) to the ABC Licensing and Compliance Division that includes the following information:

- Subject: "Liquor Liability Cancellation Requested"
- Short statement explaining that you are fully closed for business and are not selling alcohol and that you understand you will need to obtain liquor liability insurance prior to re-opening and making any sales of alcohol
- Business name
- Physical location address
- License number
- Date on which the business ceased all alcohol sales

Please keep in mind that this is strictly related to liquor liability and not general liability. You should maintain other insurance you need to protect your business in case of any issues unrelated to alcohol.

For additional assistance and information, affected businesses may [email](#) the ABC Licensing and Compliance Division (licensing@abc.alabama.gov), call your [local Licensing and Compliance Office](#) or call our main office at 334-213-6300.

Special Event Licenses for Cancelled Events

The [Order from the State Health Officer](#) limits gatherings to groups of ten people or less. As a result, we realize that events will need to be cancelled. To assist the industry during this difficult time, the Alabama ABC Board is allowing alcohol industry members that have acquired a temporary license for an event that has been cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic to apply for a refund of their license and filing fees. To request a refund, send an [email](#) to the ABC Licensing and Compliance Division (licensing@abc.alabama.gov) that includes the following information:

- Subject: "Event Permit Refund – Coronavirus"
- Short statement explaining that you are seeking a refund for the application fees you paid for a temporary permit because the event for which the permit was acquired was cancelled due to the Coronavirus situation.
- Temporary Special Event license number
- Name of the cancelled event
- Physical location at which the event was to take place
- Date on which you began or planned to begin conducting activities under the permit
- Date the event was cancelled (attach the cancellation notice)
- Name of the company seeking a refund
- Current mailing address
- A copy of the W-9

For additional assistance and information, affected businesses may [email](#) the ABC Licensing and Compliance Division (licensing@abc.alabama.gov), call your [local Licensing and Compliance Office](#) or call our main office at 334-213-6300.

Gift Cards

Gift cards are allowed provided that they are sold for the 'same as cash' price and do not offer any type of discount or inducement to purchase alcohol prohibited by [ABC Rules and Regulations 20-X-6-.12](#). For example, a licensee could not offer \$50 gift cards for sale for \$40, unless alcohol is excluded. Also, alcohol cannot be given as a prize (See [ABC Rules and Regulations 20-X-7-.01\(f\)](#)). For example, giving a bar tab or gift card as a prize would be the same as giving alcohol as a prize and would be prohibited.

**Lounges/Package stores can sell gift cards for their own location, but may not sell gift cards for other locations because that would be considered general merchandise.

Wholesaler Sales Invoices

Effective March 25, 2020 and the following 120 days.

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOL CONCERNING WHOLESALER INVOICES

Out of an abundance of caution with respect to the safety and well-being for wholesalers delivering alcoholic products, as well as retailers receiving alcoholic products, the ABC Board is recommending the following signature modification for all wholesaler sales invoices.

Additional safety protocols have become necessary to promote required social distancing for ABC licensees. For the next 120 days, ABC will suspend the requirement for wholesalers to obtain a recipient signature on invoices for alcoholic product sold, furnished, or delivered as regulated, in part, by Alabama ABC Regulations 20-X-8-.09(2), 20-X-9-.02(1)(b), and 20-X-9-.03(1)(b). In lieu of the recipient signature, the wholesaler should indicate the full name of the recipient and "COVID-19" in the recipient signature line.

Additional Outdoor Dining Space

If the licensee has a **permanent patio area** they want to add to their premises, the following requirements would need to be met:

1. Authorization from the city or county approving the addition of the patio.
2. A copy of the lease or use agreement that includes the outdoor area.
3. The area to be used must be clearly defined and must be adjacent or connected to the premises.
4. A sketch of the clearly defined patio area.
5. Once the licensee has these items, contact the district office and we will take photos of the area and add it to the premises on record.

We do not normally allow parking lots or other similar spaces to be included in the licensed premises. However, in light of the situation, we would temporarily allow these areas to be included for **temporary outdoor seating** once the following requirements are met:

1. Authorization from the city or county approving the temporary use/addition of the parking lot or other temporary outdoor dining space.
2. A copy of the lease or use agreement for the temporary outdoor seating area.
3. The area to be used must be clearly defined and must be adjacent or connected to the premises.
4. A sketch of the clearly defined outdoor seating.
5. A copy of the menu if there are any changes for the temporary outdoor dining area.
6. A timeline for use of the temporary outdoor dining area.
7. Once the licensee has these items, contact the district office and we will take photos of the area and temporarily add it to the premises on record.

ABC Information Regarding Night Clubs and Bars

We have received numerous questions regarding the [Health Officer's Order, dated May 8, 2020](#). The "higher-risk businesses and activities" listed under 9a of the State Health Officer's Order will remain closed at this time. Night clubs are listed as a higher-risk business and must remain closed. The ABC Board considers a nightclub to have the following characteristics:

- The main purpose of a "night club" is to socialize, consume alcohol, and dance.
- Night clubs typically have a dance floor area.
- Night clubs generally open for business at night and are open into the early morning hours.
- Adherence to the social distancing guidelines would be near impossible in a Night Club.

If your licensed establishment falls under number 15 of the State Health Officer's Order dated May 8, 2020, you may resume operations effective May 11, 2020, provided that you adhere to the State Health Officers Order and the State Health Officer's "[Guidelines for Restaurants and Bars](#)".

If you are able to convert your business to operate in a manner that will comply with the State Health Officer's Order and the "Guidelines for Restaurants and Bars", you may open on Monday, May 11, 2020. For example, close your dance floor and place tables in a manner that complies with social distancing, change your hours of operation to be consistent with restaurants, etc. Please see the Health Officer's Order, dated May 8, 2020, and the State Health Officer's "Guidelines for Restaurants and Bars" for additional guidance.

Of course, all businesses need to comply with local curfew ordinances, if a curfew is in effect.