

ALERT: Stay up to date on Maine's COVID-19 Response[Contact](#) | [Newsroom](#)

Search Office

SEARCH

[Home](#)[About](#) ▼[Newsroom](#) ▼[Official Documents](#) ▼[Contact](#) ▼[Home](#) → [To Protect Public Health, Mills Administration Postpones Reopening of Indoor Bar Service Across Maine](#)

To Protect Public Health, Mills Administration Postpones Reopening of Indoor Bar Service Across Maine

June 22, 2020

While outdoor seated bar service is still permitted, indoor bar service presents a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission and is linked to outbreaks in several other states

The Mills Administration announced today that it is postponing the reopening of indoor service at bars to protect public health given the higher risk of COVID-19 transmission in such settings.

Under the Administration's *Restarting Maine's Economy* plan, bars across Maine have been able to reopen for outdoor service and were tentatively scheduled to resume indoor service on July 1 (Stage 3). However, given the elevated health risk presented by bars, along with major outbreaks in other states linked to the reopening of bars, the Administration is postponing indoor service until further notice. Bars can still provide outdoor seated service to patrons, and the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations will work closely and promptly with businesses to establish or expand their outside capacity. The Administration said last week that it was evaluating the reopening of indoor bar service.

"This was a difficult but necessary decision given the increased public health risk and the outbreaks we have seen across the country associated with indoor service," said Governor Mills. "While we believe this is the most prudent step to protect the health and safety of Maine people, we recognize that it will frustrate some businesses and patrons. The Administration will work with these businesses to help them open for outdoor service to the extent they may be able to do so. Meanwhile, we will continue to monitor the prevalence of this deadly virus and take whatever steps necessary to protect people as we continue the gradual reopening process."

"Recent outbreaks related to indoor bar service in multiple states raise concerns," said Dr. Nirav D. Shah, director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "As we learn more about how the virus spreads, duration and density – specifically being in close quarters inside, as is the case with most bars – clearly elevate the risk of virus transmission."

Indoor service at bars presents a significantly elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission. Indoor service bars typically feature crowds often in close contact with one another often without tables or other ways of keeping people apart. Smaller spaces at many bars make physical distancing very difficult. Further, individuals may be less likely to wear face coverings at bars and, in some instances, may be speaking at a higher volume – both of which increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The action also follows recent reports of COVID-19 outbreaks linked to the reopening of bars in states like Florida, Texas, Louisiana, and Idaho.

There are no other updates to Stage 3 at this time. As of now, Maine has reopened the majority of its economy under the *Restarting Maine's Economy* plan. The Administration continues to monitor epidemiological data, including case trends, hospitalization rates, and reports of COVID-like symptoms, as well as health care readiness and capacity, to inform decisions about the reopening.

The Administration continues to strongly urge Maine people and businesses to follow State health requirements and U.S. and Maine CDC recommendations to protect their health and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, including wearing face coverings, staying six feet apart whenever possible, and washing hands with soap and warm water often.

Credit

Information

Connect

Contact

Copyright © 2019
All rights reserved.

- Maine.gov
- Site Policies
- Accessibility
- Document Viewers
- Governor Janet T. Mills

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram

Governor Janet Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
207-287-3531