



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Okays Outdoor Dining as Restaurants Re-Open

Move is designed to help eateries increase capacity while also observing physical distancing

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside is bolstering its local food and beverage industry through an emergency order that allows for expanded outdoor dining at re-opened restaurants, bars, breweries, pubs and wineries if they follow state guidelines designed to protect patrons from the COVID-19 virus.

The order, signed Monday by City Manager Al Zelinka in his capacity as the city’s Director of Emergency Services, and to be considered by the Riverside City Council on June 2 for ratification, remains in effect until Gov. Newsom lifts the limitations on inside dining. The order is designed to give restaurants and other facilities an opportunity to increase the number of people they can serve while also observing physical distancing and other public health measures.

“This innovative approach will give restaurants and other establishments a path forward as we steadily re-open our local economy in a safe and responsible manner,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “In keeping with our responsive culture, we are reaching out to our business owners in the hospitality field to provide them with this option.”

The order, paired with the city’s Temporary Outdoor Flex Space Permit Program, allows for outdoor dining in the public right-of-way and on private property. Options include public roadways, alleys, sidewalks and plazas, as well as private alleys, parking spots and parking lots.

The conversions must comply with all public safety standards, such as emergency rescue and fire access and disabled access. Two unique and noteworthy elements included in the program are the inclusion of several self-certified options and expedited review for the rest, which are designed to help restaurants make these changes quickly and efficiently.

Without these measures, most restaurants would see their capacity drop to a point where it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make a profit, making re-opening moot. Moving tables and chairs to the sidewalks, parking lots or other outdoor locations could help these establishments re-open with close to as many tables as before the pandemic, so they can begin to rebuild their businesses.

The order is possible because Gov. Newsom approved the application from the County of Riverside to move into the latter phase of Stage 2 of the state's Resilience Roadmap. That approval allows for the reopening of several business sectors, including dine-in restaurants, including the categories described in the city's emergency order, and shopping centers.

There is no cost for the city's permit, although there are requirements for insurance, accessibility and other needs. The permit is good for 90 days, or until Gov. Newsom lifts the restrictions on indoor seating, whichever is greater. The permit can be extended for 90 days.

Restaurants that wish to re-open should follow the state's industry guidance, which can be found at: <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-dine-in-restaurants.pdf>. The guidelines also will help patrons determine if the establishment they are visiting is taking measures to protect public health.

"Riverside is taking steps to re-open our local businesses in a safe and responsible way," Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. "This program is proof that we can innovate to support residents and businesses without sacrificing health and safety along the way."

For the latest information and resources regarding COVID-19 -- www.RiversideCA.gov/COVID-19