

Department of Agriculture Outlines Order of Restaurant Enforcement Actions, Urges Compliance

Harrisburg, PA – The Department of Agriculture today outlined the order of enforcement actions that would be taken against restaurants offering dine-in services to patrons in violation of Governor Tom Wolf’s March 19 business closure [Executive Order](#) to slow the spread of COVID-19 in the commonwealth.

“It’s important that Pennsylvania’s restaurants don’t stray from the course now, we’ve come too far, sacrificed too much to change our path,” said Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. “Restaurants are encouraged to continue only offering their services for carry-out or delivery. I, along with all of Pennsylvania, am grateful for your dedication to maintaining these life-saving measures.”

The Department of Agriculture’s Bureau of Food Safety will enforce this order for retail food facilities under the department’s jurisdiction that are re-opening and offering dine-in services. In Governor Wolf’s plan to reopen Pennsylvania, restaurants in counties in both the red and yellow phases are prohibited from offering dine-in service and are limited to take-out and delivery options only.

Food safety inspectors will follow up on reports of restaurants offering dine-in service in violation of the order. Once confirmed, the following actions will be taken by the department:

- Warning letter from the Departments of Agriculture and Health;
- Follow up inspection;
- If still in violation of the order at follow up inspection, adjudication to suspend the businesses retail food license;
- If the business continues to operate after license is revoked, citations will be filed with the magisterial district judge;
- The department may pursue civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per day of violation.

The department will work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and collaboratively across other agencies – such as with the Pennsylvania State Police, and Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board – to report and follow up on violations.

“We know that people dining together in a restaurant puts many people at risk of exposure, including patrons and employees,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “It is essential that restaurants comply with guidance and continue with carry-out and delivery options at this time. Social distancing is a primary tool to fight this virus, and we must stay the course.”

Restaurants under the department’s jurisdiction that are inspected as a result of such complaints will have public reports with details of violations filed in Pennsylvania’s restaurant inspection database, publicly accessibly via the department’s [website](#) or the free EatSafePA mobile app for both [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices.

Reports related to food safety concerns or restaurants offering dine-in services can be made online through the department’s [Food Safety Complaint Form](#).

Pennsylvania restaurants and retail food establishments are required to comply with Secretary Levine's [worker safety order](#) and adhere to guidance issued by the department for [Retail Food/Manufacturing Processes for Sanitization and Diagnosed Employees](#).

For a complete list of guidance documents and information as it relates to agriculture during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania visit agriculture.pa.gov/COVID. For the most accurate, timely information related to Health in Pennsylvania, visit on.pa.gov/coronavirus.