

Originally posted on abc.virginia.gov on March 26, 2020



Virginia ABC continues its vigilance to ensure the health and safety of our employees, customers and industry partners as together we strive to address the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak in Virginia and across the nation. Governor Northam has deemed Virginia ABC one of the commonwealth's essential services, and around the state dedicated ABC employees continue to show up to work to keep our business in operation.

While the retail stores will remain open for as long as we can safely do so, Virginia ABC will reduce all store hours statewide starting Friday, March 27. Like the adjusted store hours already in place for 24 Virginia ABC retail outlets in the cities of Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson and Williamsburg, and the counties of James City and York, ABC's remaining 364 stores across the commonwealth will be open from noon to 7 p.m., seven days a week.

Given the expanding nature of the coronavirus to other areas of the commonwealth, after consulting with the Virginia Department of Health, we believe these adjustments to our business practices will reinforce measures already in place to keep everyone safe and mitigate the impact of this virus on our employees and customers.

Reducing the time the stores will be open to customers allows staff time to stock shelves, as well as clean and thoroughly disinfect store surfaces to protect employees and customers. Additionally, the limited operating hours enable more flexibility in staffing.

On March 19, in an abundance of caution, ABC closed its store located at 1217 West Broad Street in downtown Richmond, after the roommate of an employee tested positive for COVID-19. Both remain at home in quarantine. The store will be closed for an expected two weeks. During that time, the store will undergo a thorough deep cleaning and sanitization. The remaining employees at this store have been asked to self-quarantine for two weeks. To date, no ABC employees have tested positive for COVID-19.

Our in-store tasting events and on-site RSVP and MART trainings remain cancelled until further notice. Scheduled informal conferences for licensees with violations continue to take place as scheduled via teleconference, but hearings will be postponed. All application hearings that are currently scheduled will occur.

We continue to update our website with current information on modified regulations we've enacted as a result of COVID-19. The temporary changes we've made to our existing regulations ease delivery criteria, among other things, for manufacturers, wholesalers, distilleries and others.

Effective March 20, businesses with strictly on-premise privileges (restaurants, eat-in establishments) were, through regulatory guidance enabled by Executive Order 51, allowed to exercise off-premise privileges. These privileges include the sale of wine or beer in sealed containers for curbside pickup in a designated area (parking lot, etc.), and delivery of those products to customers' homes without needing a delivery permit. In order for licensed businesses to use this feature, both curbside pickup and delivery must be facilitated by a customer's electronic order either online, over the phone or through an app.

Additionally, licensees with off-premise privileges, including breweries, farm wineries and wineries as well as distilleries operating a distillery store under an agreement with Virginia ABC, may sell products for curbside pickup in a designated area or deliveries to customers' homes without obtaining an additional delivery permit.

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Licensees may also use third-party delivery services to deliver wine or beer on their behalf, but must have a written contract with the vendor specifying terms. In response to the Governor's Executive Orders 51 and 53, ABC has recently issued a number of guidance documents that relaxes some of the requirements around the **delivery** of alcoholic beverages. Delivery is a concept that must be accomplished by the licensee, its principals or employees, or a third party that has entered into a written agreement as an agent of the licensee (examples include Doordash, Instacart, Grubhub). Delivery may only be made to Virginia residents and has volume limits (no more than four cases of beer or wine per delivery) and other safeguards to insure that underage or other ineligible persons do not receive alcoholic products.

ABC has not modified permits for the **shipping** of alcohol as a result of the recent Executive Orders. All previous limitations around shipping remain in place. Shipping is distinguished from delivering in that it involves use of an approved common carrier (FedEx and UPS are currently approved) to ship alcoholic beverages to consumers. Safeguards are in place to insure that only eligible people receive alcoholic beverages and proper sales and excise taxes are collected.

ABC has also waived the requirement for a signature on deliveries between wholesale and retail licensees, and between retail licensees (under delivery permit) and their customers. ID verification, reporting requirements and other parameters must still be followed.

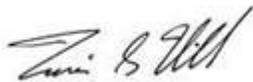
These regulation changes and any other adjustments added will remain in effect so long as the executive order remains applicable or by extension granted by ABC.

We continue to issue licenses. Individuals and businesses applying for banquet licenses are strongly encouraged to complete the application online to expedite timely processing. We ask that our licensees and customers aid in following Governor Northam's recommendation to avoid gatherings of more than 10 people and limit visits to ABC stores. Customers can practice social distancing and reduce time spent in stores by placing their order online at www.abc.virginia.gov.

We will continue to share regular virus-related business updates here. Our Media Room page also has links to our current news releases.

We are depending on everyone to get through this crisis together.

Be healthy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Travis Hill".

Travis Hill, CEO