



Governor Abbott Issues Executive Order To Open Bars In Qualifying Counties

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today issued an [Executive Order](#) to open bars and similar establishments at up to 50% capacity in conjunction with county officials. In hospital regions with [low COVID-19 hospitalizations](#), County Judges will be able to opt their county into opening bars beginning October 14th, provided they assist in enforcing [health protocols](#). **The Governor's Executive Order also increases the occupancy levels for all business establishments other than bars to 75%.**

"Even as more businesses have opened and students return to school, Texans have shown we can contain the spread of COVID-19," said Governor Abbott. "Thanks to Texans following the best health practices, our state is prepared for additional openings, including bars. Working with industry leaders and our team of medical experts, the State of Texas has now developed strategies to safely open bars under certain health protocols. To ensure bars open safely, these openings will be done in conjunction with county officials. County Judges will be able to opt their county into opening bars so long as they assist in enforcing the health protocols. Opening bars does not mean that COVID-19 is no longer a threat, and most Texans are still susceptible to the virus. As bars and similar businesses begin to open, we all must remain vigilant and show personal responsibility to protect ourselves and our loved ones."

For Trauma Service Areas (TSAs) where COVID-19 hospitalizations are less than 15% of hospital capacity, a County Judge may authorize the opening of bars and similar establishments at 50% occupancy. If a County Judge authorizes the opening of these establishments, [certain protocols must be followed](#). As recommended by trade associations representing bars, dance floors at bars and similar establishments must remain closed. Consistent with protocols for restaurants, all patrons must be seated while eating or drinking (with limited exceptions for sampling at breweries, distilleries, and wineries), and must wear masks when they are not seated at a table. Additionally, tables must be limited to six individuals or less and all establishments must follow specific curfew guidelines.

Beginning Wednesday, October 14, all counties where COVID-19 hospitalizations are less than 15% of hospital capacity can open all businesses other than bars to 75% capacity.

Additionally, the Governor released a [web video](#) with his Executive Order, encouraging Texans to continue following best practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. [The video can be viewed on YouTube.](#)

[View the Governor's Executive Order.](#) (click here or below)