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For Immediate Release

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State orders restaurants, bars to suspend dine-in services to slow spread of COVID-19

Order also limits gatherings to groups of 10, per President Trump's recommendations

SALT LAKE CITY (March 17, 2020) - The Utah Department of Health, in coordination with the Governor's Office and Utah COVID-19 Community Task Force, issued an order to all restaurants, bars, and food service establishments in the state of Utah to suspend dine-in operations for a period of two weeks.

The order is intended to limit the spread of novel coronavirus in public spaces, and takes effect tomorrow, March 18, at 11:59 p.m.

During this period, restaurants and other food service entities can continue to offer curbside, drive-thru, pick up, and delivery options. This order will be reassessed at the end of this two-week period.

“With the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in our communities, we must take quick action to adjust our daily lives and limit the spread of the virus,” Gov. Herbert said. “We have not made this decision lightly. I know this will disrupt lives and cost jobs, and for that I’m very sorry. Still, I’m convinced this will save many lives, and I’m also convinced that Utahns will step up to help each other and we’ll get through this together.”

The governor also thanked Utahns who are already looking for ways to support local businesses at this time.

“In making these decisions, we still strongly recommend that Utahns buy local, eat local, and support local businesses at this time, in whatever way they can, and within these guidelines. Our local restaurants are great sources of nutritious, secure, and delicious meals.”

Lt. Governor Spencer J. Cox, who chairs the Utah COVID-19 Community Task Force, stressed that Utah has a full-time team focusing on building Utah’s capacity to test for COVID-19.

“Until we have the ability to test widely and institute targeted isolation procedures, we must take every necessary precaution to limit the spread of the virus,” Lt. Governor Cox said. “These preventative measures will help reduce the burden on our medical system, and save lives.”

"The actions taken today are all prudent steps to be taking as we work to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Utah communities," said Dr. Joseph Miner, executive director of the Utah Department of Health. "It's becoming more and more clear that one of the most important things we can do as individuals is to practice good social distancing, and this order helps facilitate that across the state."

The order also institutes additional precautions to be taken by eating establishments, including implementing additional sanitation measures and screening employees for symptoms of COVID-19.

In accordance with recommendations President Trump made on Monday, March 16, the order also prohibits gatherings of more than ten individuals, and stipulates that access to long-term care facilities will be governed by guidance issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The order also recommends individuals refrain from visiting long-term and nursing care facilities except to provide critical assistance, and that individuals over the age of 60, or who are immunocompromised, avoid contact with others. It is also recommended that individuals avoid discretionary travel, inessential shopping trips, and social visits.

If a member of a household tests positive for COVID-19, all members of the household are directed to self-isolate.

Note: Many business owners affected by this and other elements of Utah’s COVID-19 response are now eligible for SBA loans. More information at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster).

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