



For Immediate Release: April 8, 2020

Contacts: Office of the Governor: Alena Yarmosky, Alena.Yarmosky@governor.virginia.gov |

Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority: pubrel@abc.virginia.gov

Governor Northam Announces Additional Actions Providing Relief for Restaurants and Distilleries Impacted by COVID-19 Pandemic

Executive directive defers collection of annual fees for ABC-issued licenses and permits, allows delivery of mixed beverages

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam today issued an executive directive authorizing the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) to defer annual fees for licenses and permits that would be up for renewal through June. The Governor also directed the Virginia ABC to allow establishments with mixed beverage licenses, such as restaurants and distilleries, to sell mixed beverages through takeout or delivery, effective at midnight Thursday.

Under the Governor's executive directive, the Virginia ABC will defer the collection of license renewal fees for 90 days from original expiration date for establishments with licenses expiring in March, April, May, and June. Any penalties that would normally be associated with the late payment of such fees will be waived. If a business loses their license, they would have to go back through the application process, which takes at least 30 days. This deferral will allow more than 6,000 licensed retail, wholesale and manufacturing businesses to reopen and conduct business more quickly once the crisis is passed. An estimated \$4.5 million in payments will be deferred.

"This unprecedented health crisis has had a tremendous impact on businesses across the Commonwealth, and restaurants have been hit especially hard," **said Governor Northam.** "Allowing restaurants and distilleries that remain open to sell mixed beverages with takeout or delivery orders will help them augment their revenue streams, so they can continue serving their customers and employing Virginians. These actions will give establishments with mixed beverage licenses greater flexibility to operate while their dining rooms are closed."

Many Virginia restaurants have pivoted from dine-in establishments to a combination of takeout, delivery, or makeshift drive-thrus in an effort to maintain operations amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These establishments often rely on alcohol sales to meet profit margins, and this temporary privilege will support restaurants that have lost a substantial stream of revenue from the sale of mixed beverages, and distilleries that have been unable to provide their products to the public and suffered financial losses.

“These deferrals will allow businesses to continue to operate without concern over choosing between keeping an employee or renewing a license,” **said Virginia ABC Chief Executive Officer Travis Hill.** “Without this relief, some closed businesses would be in the position of paying a fee for a license they can’t exercise or risk losing their license. Virginia ABC is committed to supporting retailers, restaurants and their employees during this pandemic.”

Earlier this week, Virginia ABC announced (<https://www.abc.virginia.gov/about/media-room/2020/04062020-distillery-shipping-privileges>) temporary in-state direct to consumer shipping privileges for local distilleries to provide industry members both small and large with a mechanism to get their product to consumers.

On March 20, Virginia ABC adjusted (<https://www.abc.virginia.gov/about/media-room/2020/03202020-abc-adjusts-licensing-regulations>) licensing regulations to permit businesses with only on-premise licenses to exercise off-premise privileges such as allowing 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 were allowed to sell products for curbside pickup in a designated area or deliveries to customers’ homes without obtaining an additional delivery permit. Distillery stores were enabled to deliver products to customers seated in their vehicle on the premises or in the parking lot of the distillery.

The full text of Executive Directive Ten is available here ([https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/ED-10-Authorizing-the-Chief-Executive-Officer-of-the-Virginia-Alcoholic-Beverage-Control-Authority-to-Take-Certain-Administrative-Action-Due-to-the-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/ED-10-Authorizing-the-Chief-Executive-Officer-of-the-Virginia-Alcoholic-Beverage-Control-Authority-to-Take-Certain-Administrative-Action-Due-to-the-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)) .

Visit [abc.virginia.gov/covid-19](https://www.abc.virginia.gov/covid-19) (<https://www.abc.virginia.gov/covid-19>) to learn more about actions Virginia ABC has taken in response to COVID-19. For additional information and resources to support Virginians impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, visit [virginia.gov/coronavirus](https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus) (<https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus-updates/>).

#