



April 22, 2020

The Indiana Economic Relief and Recovery Team
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204
Delivered electronically

Dear Task Force Leaders:

We want to commend the task force's leadership in overseeing the funds from the Federal CARES Act and for helping to assure the safety of Hoosiers as the economy is reopened on a rolling basis. The Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers (IABR) represents the interests of the nearly 1,000 package liquor stores across the state who are eagerly awaiting approval to reopen their doors to customers in exchange for implementing important safety precautions for employees and customers in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Package stores were deemed as essential in the Governor's initial stay at home order and safely operated with customers inside stores in the midst of the pandemic. During this time, members implemented a variety of steps to ensure the health and safety of its employees and customers. This is important because even though the industry is currently operating as curbside/delivery only, those practices previously implemented can easily be resumed or built upon as needed. Package stores are not typically heavily trafficked and help to alleviate crowding at other retailers. Social distancing is rarely if ever an issue and everything sold in our stores is sold for consumption off-site.

Members have found that there is actually more interaction with customers by operating in the currently mandated curbside/delivery fashion rather than operating from within their stores. Typically, a customer brings the product they wish to purchase to the register. The cashier checks the customer's ID, scans the product or products that have been selected by the customer, and completes the sale through a credit card machine reader or as a cash transaction. The counter provides a space (social distancing) between the cashier and customer. Many package liquor stores had already installed an extra barrier made out of plexiglass prior to being relegated to curbside and delivery only. In other instances, bullet proof glass has existed as a barrier between the customer and the cashier for many years.

Under the curbside/delivery regimen, the employee is interacting with a customer at the customer's vehicle or on the sidewalk to take an order and answer questions about product availability since most orders are not phoned in ahead of time. The employee checks the customer's ID and then returns to the store and brings the product back to the car. After handing the product to the customer, the employee carries the payment (credit card or cash) back into the store and then must return to the car for the necessary signature or to give change. Providing a safe and clean environment for the sale of the highly regulated product that we are privileged to sell is of the utmost importance to our members.

Package stores understand that it is a privilege to reopen their doors and that a reopening of the economy does not mean they can take a business as usual approach; precautions will need to continue for some time to help fight against the spread of the virus. Thorough daily cleaning practices must continue and adhering to CDC guidance and state recommendations is essential. In addition to these actions, the Board of Directors endorsed the following measures as minimum standards in exchange for reopening its doors:

- Reduce the hours of operation to no more than 12-hours.
- Reserve the first hour of business to the vulnerable population.
- Limit the total number of people inside a store to no more than CDC or Indiana State Department of Health's recommendation.
- Take steps to ensure compliance with social distancing guidelines such as marking where to stand on check-out lanes and other measures to reduce customer and clerk interactions.
- Require an additional barrier be put in place between the customer and employee at check-out (cough or sneeze guard, curtain, bullet proof glass, etc.).
- Provide hand sanitizer for customers inside the store.
- Post signs on door, inside the store, and in employee only areas about signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to increase awareness.
- Require the regular cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces frequently touched throughout the day.
- Require employees to wear gloves and mask provided by employer or allow an employee to supply a mask of their choosing.
- Encourage staff who are sick or showing any symptoms to stay home and self-isolate.
- Each day employees will be asked the following questions:
 - Have you traveled outside of the state?
 - How is your health today?
 - Have you come into contact with anyone with COVID-19?

If an employee answers yes to the above questions the employer will take appropriate measures consistent with CDC guidelines.

The alcohol industry is a highly regulated environment which has operated in a professional manner for a long time and package store owners take their business of selling this product seriously. Currently all package liquor stores are owned by Indiana residents and the industry stands ready to do their part to ensure the state does not slide backwards with efforts to curb COVID-19. IABR has plans in place to communicate requirements for reopening and has also formulated a plan to reach non-members to ensure the industry's compliance. IABR believes these suggested minimum standards represent meaningful steps and ask that the industry be placed in the first category of businesses allowed to reopen in early May.

As you are aware, package liquor stores have remained operational in almost all states and have been able to welcome customers inside their stores with proper safeguards in place without issue. Many of our competitors in the marketplace have maintained the ability to serve customers in their stores under the second and third "Hunker Down Hoosiers" orders signed by Governor Holcomb. We are looking forward to moving forward with customers inside the store again while having proper precautions in place.

I am happy to discuss these or any additional items and can be reached by email, Gretchen.White@Catalystpag.com, or by phone (317) 270-8247. Thank you for your consideration of our plan. We look forward to the privilege of welcoming customers back into our stores.

Sincerely,



Gretchen White
Executive Director