Expanding Outdoor Dining, Bars and Barriers FAQs

Expanded Outdoor Dining

Expanded outdoor dining can help provide extra seating while still maintaining social distancing requirements.

1. **How do I get approval to use the outdoor space of my business?**
   
   Ensure approval from your local jurisdiction before using sidewalks, parking spaces, parking lots or other areas as additional seating. You may require approval from your local Zoning, Planning, Public Works or other governing agency to use additional outdoor space.

2. **Can I use space immediately adjacent to my restaurant that is under my direct control?**
   
   Ensure the space you intend to use is contiguous with and immediately adjacent to your restaurant. Space you use for dining must be under your facility’s direct control and observation, and your staff should be able to easily monitor it and proactively ensure proper social distancing of your customers and the public. Outdoor dining that is separated from your restaurant by a road, additional open space, or other similar distance is not approved.

3. **What are the social distancing requirements for customers and guests with expanded outdoor dining?**
   
   Outdoor dining areas must follow all the same social distancing, disinfection and COVID-19 risk reduction measures as indoor dining areas. You must follow your business plan for COVID-19 reduction and the State Guidance, as well as California Retail Food Code, in all of your outdoor dining areas.

4. **Does dust impact the use of an outdoor area?**
   
   Do not use outdoor areas that are located on unpaved surfaces where dust can be generated (dirt, gravel, etc.) or adjacent to these areas (fields, dirt or gravel lots). Areas that are fully grassed, landscaped with low-dust ground cover (such as mulch or decomposed granite) or that are paved are appropriate for outdoor dining. For areas that are in the public right of way when not in use for dining, such as sidewalks, parking lots or roads, clean the area prior to, and after dining hours of operation to remove trash and to keep dust down.

5. **Can an outdoor area be used if there are flies or other vermin?**
   
   Prevent and/or avoid flies and other vermin. Outdoor dining areas should not be used if there are significant numbers of flies, or near locations where flies are common (stables, livestock pens, etc.) If flies are an issue, close the outdoor space.

6. **Can work stations be located in the outdoor area?**
   
   Keep server’s stations and all food preparation and storage inside. Server’s stations with water pitchers, utensils, dishes, condiments, complimentary appetizers such as bread or chips shall be kept inside the fully enclosed food facility at all times. These items may not be stored outdoors.

7. **Can alcohol be served in an expanded dining area?**
   
   The County of Santa Barbara does not issue ABC licenses nor regulate them. It is important that any business that holds an ABC license, contact the ABC directly prior to altering their operations (for example, if expanding, ensure that the proposed activities are consistent with the current business license).
Bars

1. **Can Bars and/or other establishments that serve only alcohol reopen at this time?**
   No. Bars and/or other establishments that serve only alcohol will reopen in Stage 3 in accordance with the Governor’s guidelines.

2. **May restaurants serve alcohol?**
   Restaurants and other food facilities that serve both food and alcohol may serve alcohol only when served with a meal and during the same transaction (No individual may consume alcohol on-site without also being served a meal for on-site consumption in the same transaction). Restaurants are permitted to serve alcohol for off-site consumption (growlers, to-go cocktails) with an ABC license that allows it, and also must be ordered with a meal. Breweries or wineries that have ABC licenses to sell of premise can continue to sell cans, bottles or growlers for take away without selling food.

3. **Can guests sit at the bar itself in an establishment?**
   No seating at the bar itself is allowed, as this is also a food preparation area.

4. **If a business serves only alcohol, can they contract with a food provider for meals?**
   Yes. If a facility serves only alcohol, they may contract with a food provider to provide meals to guests, so long as the meal and the alcohol provided are sold in the same transaction. These food providers may be either:
   - A mobile food facility with a current health permit from Santa Barbara County OR
   - A caterer with a current health permit from Santa Barbara County IF the alcohol-selling facility has a Host Kitchen health permit from Santa Barbara County.
   - Please keep in mind that all foodservice, including food that is given away, must have a health permit from Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services.

5. **Is music or other entertainment allowed in a restaurant or food facility?**
   No music or other entertainment may take place in a food facility, bar or tasting room with foodservice arrangements at this time. Activities are restricted to food service only.

Barriers

1. **When must a restaurant or food establishment use protective barriers?**
   Barriers should only be used when tables or chairs cannot be moved in order to provide the required social distancing of 6’ between diners (ie: for built-in booths or banquettes). Increasing the number of people in a space increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Restaurants should make every possible effort to space parties of people dining together at least 6’ away from other parties of diners, either by moving chairs / tables OR by leaving tables / chair unoccupied.

2. **If barriers are used, what are the guidelines?**
   - Smooth, durable, and easily cleanable.
   - Barriers must end no less than 18 inches from the ceiling, or as otherwise required by the Fire Marshal, so that they do not interfere with fire-suppression sprinklers.
   - Safe for use, and anchored so that they do not pose hazards to those near them (such as during an earthquake, or by tipping over if bumped against).
3. **Is a permit required for installation of barriers?**  
   
   The installation of any barriers may require a permit from the Building Department or the Health Department, depending on location; contact those agencies for review prior to installing. For example, if installation of barriers involves alterations of load bearing walls, plumbing or wiring may require a building permit.