



City of Wharton
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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“Back in Business”
Update 5/18/2020

The City of Wharton has established this “Back in Business” framework to help ease our businesses in re-opening their doors. The “Back in Business” campaign has been developed as the State and Federal governments re-open Texas. At this time certain businesses have been allowed to open at a 25% capacity, including retail and restaurant establishments, gyms and exercise facilities, manufacturers, and office based businesses, as announced by the Governor on Monday, May 5th, taking effect at 12:01 a.m. Monday, May 18th.

As of Monday May 18th, per the Governor’s expanded Executive Order GA-23, effective immediately, ‘massage establishments and other facilities where licensed massage therapists or other persons licensed or otherwise authorized to practice, Personal-care and beauty services that have not already been reopened, such as tattoo studios, piercing studios, hair removal services, and hair loss treatment and growth services, and child-care services may resume’.

Additionally, ‘starting at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, May 22nd, 2020, ‘dine-in restaurant services, for restaurants may now operate at up to 50% of the total listed occupancy, while bars and similar establishments may operate up to 25% occupancy. Rodeos and equestrian events may operate also begin to operate at the 25% capacity’.

Further, per the Governor’s Executive Order GA-23, ‘starting at 12:01 a.m. on Sunday, May 31, 2020, youth camps, including summer camps and other daytime and overnight camps for youths, and youth sports programs may resume, with games and similar competitions beginning no sooner than June 15th’.

Other types of businesses not common to our area, such as family entertainment centers like zoo’s, bowling alleys, drive-in movie theaters, bingo halls, and professional sports, may also resume with limited capacity. More information on these types of businesses can be found in the Governor’s Executive Order GA-23 at https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/EO-GA-23_phase_two_expanding_opening_COVID-19.pdf.

What does this mean for businesses?

Q: What businesses will be allowed to open under this?

A: Restaurants operating at the 25% capacity may increase to allow 50% capacity effective May 22nd. Bars may re-open but only at 25% capacity effective May 22nd. Any interactive areas of businesses, like playgrounds and dartboards or pool tables, should not be made available at this time. This also allows for little league teams to begin practicing, as well as rodeos and equestrian events. Other types of businesses not common to our area are also allowed to begin. Please see details for these others business types in the Governor’s Executive Order GA-23 at https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/EO-GA-23_phase_two_expanding_opening_COVID-19.pdf.

Q: What requirements exist for businesses that have been or are now allowed to re-open?

A: Here are the requirements that businesses need to know:

- *'Minimum Standard Health Protocols' include tools published by the Governor for both businesses and customers on how to be safe and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Businesses should at the very least practice these standards to keep staff and customers safe, as should customers be aware of protocols in seeking goods & services. These tools can be found online at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/opentexas>.*
- *Restaurants that are required to post the 51% sign required by the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission' because more than 51% of their sales are alcohol based, are only allowed to operate at 25%. All other restaurants must limit customers to 50% capacity starting Friday May 22nd at 12:01 a.m.*
- *Occupancy count does not include the staff members or outdoor seating areas.*
- *This order does not require private businesses to open but does allow for it as outlined on this phased plan.*

Q: What do I need to know about keeping my staff and customers safe during re-opening?

A: Businesses that are allowed to open with limitations are requested to follow the health protocols listed in the Governor's "Reopen Texas" report at <http://gov.texas.gov/opentexas>. This link includes health protocols and guidelines for all types of businesses and customers.

More information about safe business can be found at:

CDC Guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/Index.html>

ADA: https://www.ada.gov/emerg_prep.html

OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

Q: What does occupancy mean?

A: "Occupancy" means the maximum number of people that are allowed to be in your establishment. The Certificate of Occupancy that was issued to you by the City of Wharton states your maximum allowed number of people allowed in your building at any given time. To calculate 50% max occupancy multiply .50 by the regular occupancy number to determine your 50% occupancy cap (ex. $.50 \times 100 = 50$ people maximum for a business that normally has a maximum capacity of 100). Note that occupancy counts do not include staff members or outdoor seating areas, this applies to the number of customers that can be inside the building at the same time.

Q: What happens next?

A: Businesses can most likely anticipate a very slow return to normal. Here are some tips for businesses that are struggling to keep up with the changes as our City transitions through this time:

- *Businesses need to help customers feel safe shopping and dining again, and should be mindful to observe CDC Guidelines – being obvious about following these guidelines (such as providing complimentary hand sanitizer, wiping down point-of-sale stations between customers, continuing to keep communal stations - like self-serve drinks closed, etc.) will help customers feel safe and confident in conducting business at your establishment.*

- *The City of Wharton has an opportunity to provide some assistance to businesses. We recognize that small grants are not always the best help, but that information sessions, workshops, and support for things like building websites may be. **WE NEED BUSINESSES TO HELP**, tell us what your business needs and challenges are so that we can help bring meaningful and effective tools and resources to our community of business owners. Please take a moment to answer our questionnaire available online at <https://forms.gle/FfdgdasTqUAKv33R7>. You may also call or email us to conduct this questionnaire by phone or to obtain a hard copy. Businesses are encouraged to follow the City of Wharton Community Development Department online at <https://www.Facebook.com/WhartonCD> and to contact Krystal Hasselmeier at KHasselmeier@cityofwharton.com or by phone at 979-532-2491 x239 to make sure your business contact information is in our listing*

We know there are many more questions out there and that there will continue to be as we move forward in this process. The City of Wharton is dedicated to supporting its business community through this time and is eager to see Wharton 'back in business'. Please contact the Community Development Department at 979-532-2491 for more information.

Sincerely,

Community Development Department
City of Wharton