



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 25, 2021

### **Wyandotte County, KS Joins Johnson County, KS and Jackson County, MO in Removing Closing Time Restrictions on Bars, Restaurants, and Taverns**

*Jurisdictions Focus on Bringing Consistency for Area Businesses While Still Guarding Public Health*

Leaders with the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas, Johnson County, Kansas, and Jackson County, Missouri announced changes today regarding operating hours for bars, restaurants, and taverns in those counties. **David Alvey, Mayor and CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, Johnson County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Ed Eilert, and Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr.** issued a joint statement:

“We continue to work together as a region to follow the data and take appropriate steps to protect public health. Harmonizing our COVID rules regarding bar and restaurant closing times makes life simpler for businesses and residents. We are encouraged by the progress our region is making in fighting the virus, but we also know the fight is not over, and people need to continue to wear masks, social distance, and get vaccinated.”

Both the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) and the Jackson County Health Department issued new Health Orders reflecting this change. Johnson County amended an existing Health Order (see details, below).

“Business owners and operators in our region have gone to great lengths to comply with and implement health protocols to keep their staff, customers, and the community safe since the start of the pandemic,” said **David Alvey, Mayor and CEO of the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas**. “Our primary goal has been and remains containing the spread of COVID-19, while simultaneously working to help residents, businesses, and the community manage and retain a sense of normalcy during these challenging times. As such, I’m pleased that the latest public health data is allowing for further relaxation of existing Health Orders for local operators, and that this is being done jointly between Wyandotte, Jackson, and Johnson Counties in an effort to provide consistency and uniformity for both businesses and patrons. While service hours are being expanded, it remains the responsibility of everyone to do so in a safe and controlled manner, working to ensure employees and customers continue to mask up, maintain social distancing, disinfect, and work to protect the public health.”

“Successful partnerships require humility, respect for one another, and sacrificing one’s individual interests for the whole. Not all leaders, especially elected ones, are able to do that. However, I am grateful that from the very early days of this pandemic, we have stood united in our commitment to science and united in our belief that we can be most effective in protecting our communities when we work together,” said **Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr.** “While we have relaxed some restrictions in our order, we cannot let our guard down. The UK variant has been found in wastewater systems in eastern Jackson County, Kansas City, and in wastewater originating in Johnson County. Studies show this variant spreads more easily and quickly than others, which

could lead to a surge in more COVID cases. Moving forward, it is imperative that mask wearing, social distancing, and frequent hand washing are practiced vigorously until we can all get vaccinated.”

“Our local public health order as well as the cooperation of our residents and business community have helped mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community,” said **Johnson County Board of County Commissioners Chairman Ed Eilert**. “We encourage everyone to continue to wear masks, physically distance and avoid crowds, but feel that removing this time restriction on our restaurants and bars will help that sector of our business community serve its clientele. We encourage them to do so in the safe manner they have been by following gathering, capacity, and physical distancing protocols.”

### **Details about the New Wyandotte County Local Health Order (LHO 2/25/21)**

The new order goes into effect at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, February 26. Under a previous health order, restaurants, bars, and taverns were required to close by 12:30 a.m. Under the new order:

- The closing time restriction has been lifted. Restaurants, bars, and taverns may remain open until their pre-pandemic closing time.
- Once closed for the evening, these businesses must remain closed until at least 6 a.m. each day. Restaurants can operate between their pre-pandemic closing time and 6 a.m. for drive through or delivery services only.

Additional protocols remain the same as outlined in previous orders, including:

- Restaurants, bars, and taverns must still restrict customer capacity to no more than 50 percent of building capacity.
- During business hours, patrons must remain seated to the greatest extent possible, and all patrons must be masked except when actively eating or drinking.
- Parties of guests (whether indoors or outdoors) are limited to no more than eight people.
- Guest parties must be socially distanced at least six feet apart.

### **Details About Revisions to Johnson County, KS Local Health Order #002-20**

On Thursday, Feb. 25, the Johnson County Board of Public Health approved the removal of curfews and closing times for restaurants, bars, night clubs, and other businesses licensed to sell alcohol for on-premises consumption that are currently included in Section II, paragraphs (4) and (5) of Johnson County Board of Public Health Order No. 002-20. This was effective immediately. No other changes were made to the order, which lasts through March 31, 2021.

### **Details About the New Jackson County, MO Local Health Order**

The new order takes effect at 12:01 a.m. Friday, February 26 and does not apply in the cities of Kansas City, Missouri, or Independence, Missouri. Under the new order:

- Restaurants, bars, and taverns can resume normal operating hours to serve food and alcohol. Indoor and outdoor seating at tables remains limited to no more than 10 people.
- Gatherings under 50 people are no longer required to submit a Gathering Protocol.
- Any gathering exceeding 50 people must submit a Gathering Protocol at least seven (7) business days in advance of the event. The Gathering Protocol must be approved by Jackson County and easily accessible to all attendees.

Gatherings include, but are not limited to, non-essential business activities such as weddings, funerals, lectures, meetings, parades, fairs, festivals, sporting events, and performances. Jackson County’s mask mandate and 50 percent capacity limit for all businesses that are frequented by the public remain in effect.

Jackson County residents and businesses can learn more by visiting the health department online at [www.jacohd.org/coronavirus](http://www.jacohd.org/coronavirus), by phone at (816) 404-6415, or via email at [COVID19@tmcmcd.org](mailto:COVID19@tmcmcd.org).

Wyandotte County residents can learn more online at [wycokck.org/COVID-19](http://wycokck.org/COVID-19), or by calling 3-1-1.

Johnson County residents can learn more online at [jocogov.org](http://jocogov.org).

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**Restaurant & Bar  
Hour Restrictions  
Loosened**  
*in Jackson, Johnson, &  
Wyandotte Counties*