



News Release

Oregon Liquor Control Commission
9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Portland, OR 97222-7355
1-800-452-6522

For more information:

Mark Pettinger, OLCC Spokesperson
mark.pettinger@oregon.gov 971-235-7561 (mobile)

Bryant Haley, OLCC Spokesperson
bryant.haley@oregon.gov 971-990-3254 (mobile)
www.oregon.gov/olcc

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Oregon Bars & Restaurants Working Hard to Safely Stay Open

Some businesses undercutting social distancing compliance efforts

Additional referrals sent to Oregon OSHA for evaluation

Hospitality industry implores compliance, fearing harm to customers, businesses

PORTLAND, OR. – Results from a second round of weekend compliance checks of Oregon bars and restaurants shows most of them followed required social distancing and face covering guidelines. Oregon Liquor Control Commission inspectors checked 1,428 OLCC alcohol licensees from Friday, July 10 to Sunday, July 12, 2020.

These checks follow the 800 inspections OLCC conducted across Oregon during the 4th of July holiday weekend. Those three days of inspections launched an enhanced statewide effort to encourage alcohol licensees to do their part to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus by operating with proper physical distancing and ensuring that staff and customers were wearing face coverings.

Last weekend OLCC inspectors issued **verbal instructions** to comply with social distancing and face covering guidelines **to 81 bars and restaurants**, which is **less than six percent of the alcohol licensees inspected**. The OLCC has also sent **15 incident reports** to Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration for actions against OLCC licensees willfully choosing not to follow the guidelines. Still, that's just **one percent of the licensed establishments** OLCC inspectors checked.

"It's unbelievable that a sliver of the hospitality industry is putting at risk everyone's reopening economic investment," said Steve Marks, OLCC Executive Director. "It's a shame that so many businesses in that industry are doing their all to protect employees and customers and just a few are gambling with everyone else's health and livelihood."

Meanwhile, OLCC, based on its compliance checks, has referred 15 cases to Oregon OSHA for further evaluation. Those cases are in addition to nine OLCC previously referred to Oregon OSHA.

OLCC inspectors will continue to make regular weekend checks of bars and restaurants looking for violations of Oregon alcohol laws and OLCC rules, and will also maintain their monitoring of businesses to see if they're meeting social distancing and face covering requirements.

The hospitality industry is reinforcing the importance for bar and restaurant employees and customers to wear face coverings and maintain physical distancing, not just to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, but also to help the hospitality and tourism industries try to survive.

"It's the responsibility of everyone in this industry to take ownership for themselves, their employees and their customers to follow these guidelines," said Jason Brandt, President and CEO of the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association. "It's taken a lot of effort by the industry and its partners, including the OLCC, to help hospitality businesses reopen to a portion of the demand they once enjoyed in an effort to save their livelihoods."

Similar sentiments were shared by Roger Nyquist, an OLCC licensee who owns the Lakeshore Lanes Bowling Alley in Albany. "In order for the hospitality industry to recover, people need to know it is safe to come back to our licensed facilities," said Nyquist. "The implementation of the requirement to wear masks is an important component of gaining that confidence with the public."

Nyquist, who also serves as Chair of the Linn County Commission, says the impact on "Main Street" businesses makes universal compliance essential. "In the last two weeks the OLCC staff has done an outstanding job working with establishments to ensure that everyone is following the rules," said Nyquist. "OLCC field representatives will continue to be an important resource to the industry as we work toward a full economic recovery while ensuring the public's safety."

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OLCC Bar & Restaurant Compliance Inspections
(July 10th to July 12th, 2020) Updated 7/17/2020

- ✓ 1,428 visits by OLCC inspectors
- ✓ Verbal instructions issued to 81 licensees or 5% of bars and restaurants visited by OLCC inspectors.
- ✓ 15 incident reports forwarded to Oregon OSHA for action, which is about 1% of the licensees visited.

OLCC Regional Office	Visits	Verbal Instructions* <u>OLCC Rules</u>	OLCC violations	Verbal Instructions* <u>Social Distancing & Face Coverings</u>	Referrals to Oregon OSHA
Portland Metro (Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington, Hood River, Wasco counties)	636	0	0	43	2
Medford region (Coos, Curry, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath, Lake counties)	188	0	0	22	3
Salem region (Clatsop, Columbia, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Yamhill counties)	282	0	0	1	0
Bend region (includes Central & Eastern Oregon counties)	142	0	2	7	9
Eugene region (Benton, Douglas, Lane, Lincoln, Linn counties)	180	2	0	12	1

*Verbal Instruction gives OLCC licensees the opportunity to make immediate corrective actions in regards to compliance issues per an Inspector's guidance rather than proceeding with a formal violation. Inspectors use this as a tool to provide education and gain licensee compliance.