



# COVID-19 Update



## DAILY VRLTA UPDATE 3/24/20

### LEAD NEWS: VRLTA Request for Governor to Classify Hospitality as Essential

As you may know from the Governor's COVID-19 press conference, there has been a lot of confusion around essential and non-essential businesses and workers. While we have learned that restaurants must close their dining rooms, they may continue to offer takeout, curbside pickup, and delivery. Hotels and campgrounds can also remain open, but if there is a restaurant within that lodging establishment, it must do either room service or carryout/pickup. To reinforce the critical nature of restaurants and lodging establishments, VRLTA has sent correspondence to the Governor urging him to classify these hospitality related businesses and their employees as essential.

### Federal Update

Progress continues toward a deal on economic relief. People are talking less about *if* a deal will be reached and more about *when* the House and Senate will approve it after it is unveiled. We have no guidance for you on the timing, but there are more expectations that the House will come together and approve it by unanimous consent—thus avoiding an in-person vote—if a bipartisan agreement is reached. There is a growing belief that a deal will be announced today.

We remain focused on ensuring that the text of the bill is properly worded so our lending/grant programs are fully available to restaurants. The last draft of the bill excludes any restaurant with more than \$500M in revenue from being included in the “carveout” that was secured for our industry. We are engaging the Hill accordingly.

Finally, we joined a core group of travel and hospitality associations to circulate the attached letter outlining some of our collective asks and proposed refinements to the bill. [You can see the letter here.](#)

### Virginia's Lodging industry stands to lose 78,000+ jobs

[Read the Virginia Business article here.](#)



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## Hotels: Do you want to make space available to local, state, and federal government?

Governors, mayors and public health officials across the country are seeking hoteliers who are willing to enter into temporary leases for certain types of lodging properties at this time. The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) is currently working with the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to create a database of willing properties in order to meet the demand for housing capacity during the pandemic. [Check out the Hotels for Hope website here.](#)

[If you are interested, please complete this form.](#)

## Sale of Unprepared Restaurant Food

As we you may know, grocery stores are having difficulty meeting the food needs of Virginia consumers. To help alleviate that shortage and allow food service establishments to have another source of income, we contacted the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) for guidance and feedback.

VDH has indicated that food establishments may sell any food—prepared as a menu item or unprepared—from their restaurant directly to the consumer as long as they are serving food from sources that comply with law ([12VAC5-421-270/3-201.11](#)) and serving directly to the end user.

VDH will be working to update their guidance for food establishments (available [here](#)) with this information; we have been told this document is used by local health districts and call centers.

## Business-Related Questions of State COVID-19 Actions

On today's Governor's daily press conference, the Governor acknowledged there is a lot of confusion in the business community and encouraged those with questions to contact them at [business@virginia.gov](mailto:business@virginia.gov).

## ABC Information - Alternative or Novel Containers

VRLTA has received the following guidance from the Virginia Alcohol Beverage Control Authority in response to the use of alternative containers or novel containers:

Pursuant to Executive Order 51 dated March 12, 2020, the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority is offering the following opinion in regard to 3VAC5-40-30. Background: Currently, no wine or beer shall be sold for off-premises consumption in any container upon



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which the original closure has been broken, except for a growler. A "growler" is defined as a resealable container made of glass, ceramic, metal, or other materials approved by the board as well as resealable containers approved by the board.

The Authority acting under the abilities granted within Executive Order 51 has made the decision to grant this one time exception to allow a deviation from this regulation and approve the below listed containers. All maximum limitations referenced in the regulation will remain in effect. Due to concerns around refilling customer owned growlers and the cost associated with glass, ceramic, or metal, containers, the Authority is approving the following types of containers until the expiration of Executive Order 51. Current representative list of approved container types:

1. [PET Plastic Growler Bottles \(up to and including 64 oz. sizes\).](#)
2. [PET Plastic Bottles \(up to and including 64 oz. sizes\).](#)
3. [Swing Top Bottles \(up to 750mL sizes\).](#)
4. Flip Top Beer Bottles (up to 32 oz.). <https://www.morebeer.com/products/ez-cap-fliptop-beer-bottles-16-oz-amber-case-12.html> and <https://www.morebeer.com/products/beer-bottles-flip-top-750-ml-amber-case-12.html>.

## State Emergency Vendor List

If you are a vendor or contractor with goods or services to offer, please check and register at the eVA website <https://eva.virginia.gov> AND email logistics at [VEST.logistics@vdem.virginia.gov](mailto:VEST.logistics@vdem.virginia.gov) and [jason.eaton@vdem.virginia.gov](mailto:jason.eaton@vdem.virginia.gov).

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Continue to visit <https://www.virginiaisforrestaurantlovers.com> for more information about the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on the tourism and hospitality industries. We are working to add additional resources, links, and news articles as they become available.