



Palmer Township Business Recovery Program

PURPOSE

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf issued guidance on May 27, 2020 authorizing outdoor dining in Commonwealth communities that are coded Yellow in the COVID-19 matrix specifically; “beginning June 5, restaurants and retail food service businesses located in counties designated as being in the yellow phase are permitted to add dine-in service in outdoor seating areas so long as they adhere to the requirements and guidance of the Commonwealth.”

Previously Governor Wolf issued guidance on May 22, 2020 stating that Northampton County, (Palmer Township), will transition to a Yellow COVID stage also on June 5, 2020. Accordingly, it is the intention of the Staff and Elected Officials of Palmer Township to assist all local Township businesses as they recover and resume operations as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As a basis of authorization to act, on March 24, 2020, and as amended on April 13, 2020, the Palmer Township Board of Supervisors issued a proclamation of Disaster Emergency. The proclamation authorizes the municipality to take appropriate action needed to alleviate the effects of the COVID-19 disaster, and to take any other emergency response action deemed necessary to respond to the emergency.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Township Administration to ensure that all businesses subject to this guidance conduct their operations in the manner best designed to prevent or mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of their workforce and public to which it serves.

PROCEDURE

Nothing in this policy shall exempt businesses from compliance with Federal, Commonwealth, County, or Insurance regulations. The policy established in this Business Recovery Program shall consist of relaxed local regulations. Business owners shall contact proper Federal, Commonwealth, County, or Insurance authorities for specific regulations and/or clarifications affected by their business operations.

As part of the recovery assistance to local businesses the following rules, regulations, and ordinance provisions are temporarily revised; see specific subsections of below for further information and other requirements of compliance:

1. Permitted time for posting of temporary signage to promote a business.
2. Permitted time for posting of permitted banners to promote a business.
3. Temporary signage size restrictions as well as permitted types.

4. Zoning Districts restricted from temporary signage to promote a business.
5. Permit fees for temporary signs to promote a business waived.
6. Temporary tents permitted times of usage.
7. Temporary tents permitted locations.
8. Permit fees for temporary tents waived.

TEMPORARY SIGNAGE

To assist local businesses in the recovery process, special restrictions of certain signage are relaxed during the period of the Disaster Declaration. All relaxed rules and regulations for signage as established herein shall terminate upon lifting of the Disaster Declaration as determined by Township Officials. Therefore, all normally restricted signage as established by the Zoning Ordinance shall be removed within seven (7) days of termination of the Disaster Declaration.

Business owners must request a temporary permit and permit approved by the Township Zoning Officer to post special signage promoting their business. Temporary signage approved under this plan include:

1. Banner for all zoning districts permitted but shall not to exceed 20 square feet in size. One banner per property only.
2. Yard signs not to exceed 16 square feet per side. Yard signs shall not pose traffic hazards.
3. Sandwich signs (A-Frame Signs) shall not to exceed 8 square feet per side.

Normal permit fees shall be waived for all signage mentioned above in accordance with this Business Recovery Program. Application for temporary permit on signage shall be submitted to the Zoning Officer and shall be Approved/Not Approved within one (1) business day of receiving application.

OUTDOOR DINING AND TEMPORARY TENTS

To support local restaurants and retail food services, the Township intends to review and expedite outdoor dining requests and construction of temporary tents permits on a case-by-case basis.

All relaxed rules and regulations for outdoor dining and temporary tents as established herein shall terminate upon lifting of the Disaster Declaration as determined by Township Officials. Therefore, all normally restricted outdoor seating and tents as established by the Zoning Ordinance and Township Fire Code shall be removed within seven (7) days of termination of the Disaster Declaration.

Restaurants that wish to do outdoor dining shall submit an outdoor seating plan for review by the Code Enforcement Officer. Handwritten submission is permissible. Plan shall detail the following:

1. Dining Table locations and number of seats per table.
2. Plan shall identify Fire Lanes, Hydrants if on property, Sprinkler/Standpipe Connections, driveway aisles, pedestrian or handicap access parking areas.
3. Plan shall identify the entrances and exits from the building.

4. Parking spaces may be used for dining tables. However, if possible physical delineation separating customers from vehicle traffic shall be provided.

Restaurants that wish to construct a temporary tent for purposes of outdoor dining shall submit site plan for review by the Code Enforcement Officer. Plan shall detail the following:

1. Proposed location of temporary tent. Constructing on existing parking lot is permitted.
2. Dining table locations and seating arrangement.
3. Identify number of existing parking spaces.
4. Identify location of fire extinguishers
5. Tent shall be anchored in place to prevent movement from wind.
6. Identify delineation of customers from vehicle traffic.
7. Identify entrance and exits from the tent(s).

Restaurants that use outdoor seating must ensure that outdoor dining areas are maintained and free from trash and other debris.

When using multiple tents, tents should be fastened together.

Normal permit fees shall be waived for all outdoor dining and temporary tents in accordance with this Business Recovery Program. Application for temporary permit shall be submitted to the Code Enforcement Officer and shall be Approved/Not Approved within one (1) business day of receiving application.

APPEALS PROCESS

Any applicant denied temporary permit in accordance with this program will be forwarded to the Township Manager, or Assistant Township Manger in his absence, for further review or clarification.

Applicant has the right to file a follow-up proposal to the Township Manager for further review and consideration.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants should contact Kathy Sciascia at 610-253-7191, Ext. 1112 or ksciascia@palmertwp.com for applications.

Questions can be forwarded to Dan Lichtenwalner at 610-253-7191, Ext. 1115 or dlichtenwalner@palmertwp.com