

From the Boston Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2020/05/21/boston-restaurant-reopening-with-outdoor-seating.html>

## Boston officials ease rules for restaurants ahead of reopening

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Boston restaurants will be allowed to apply to seat patrons outside when the city opens eateries for dine-in service, and can also explore expanding outdoor seating temporarily onto sidewalks and streets.

The city's licensing board approved the emergency provisions at a hearing on Thursday. The board also temporarily lifted the "alcohol with food only" rule for outdoor seating, which will allow restaurants to serve alcohol to patrons seated outdoors without any accompanying food.

"We want to help restaurants recover and create safe distance options for everyone," Boston Mayor [Marty Walsh](#) said at a Thursday press conference. "This is for when dining at restaurants is allowed back in the plan, and this is not phase 1. But we want to be ready."

Some 147 restaurants have already responded to a licensing board questionnaire regarding outdoor seating, Walsh said. Those restaurants span all Boston neighborhoods, and range from small restaurants and coffeeshops to larger downtown eateries, according to city officials.

"Extensions into the public way, whether sidewalks or streets, require evaluation by multiple departments to confirm doing so can be done while ensuring the safety of patrons and employees," city officials said in a Thursday press release. "The goal is to be able to process and approve these temporary extensions administratively without requiring hearings, fees, or multiple applications going to multiple departments."

Restaurants across the state have been banned from in-person dining since mid-March, and half of the industry's 300,000-person workforce has been laid off. Groups of restaurateurs last week lobbied Gov. [Charlie Baker](#) to allow restaurants to fully reopen next month.

The city of Brockton is also taking steps to permit outdoor seating — which has never been allowed, Mayor [Robert Sullivan](#) announced Thursday. Sullivan's proposal needs approval from Brockton's City Council.

"In this COVID-19 environment, we need to provide restaurants all options to cater to their patrons and protect the safety of their employees," Sullivan said in a statement. "Patios and outdoor seating will allow restaurants to serve more customers, even as their indoor capacities are reduced to comply with physical distancing rules. Our restaurants are vital small businesses that employ hundreds of workers and we need to do everything we can to support them."

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SAM DORAN/STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

A sign on the door of Tibet Emporium on Charles Street informed customers the shop was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

