

Outdoor areas of catering establishments reopen in accordance with health protocol

In view of the reopening of catering establishments as of 16 March 2021, and with the aim of their safe operation for the benefit of businesses, employees and citizens, the Health Services of the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Scientific Advisory Committee on Coronavirus, have issued a health protocol.

Based on the health protocol, the following should be noted:

- The operation of catering establishments is allowed **until 10:45 in the evening.**
- The catering establishments which are permitted to operate are:
 - restaurants,
 - taverns,
 - cafes,
 - pubs,
 - snack bars and bars,
 - coffee shops,
 - catering establishments within shopping centres,
 - catering establishments within hotels and tourist accommodation, canteens and / or sports clubs, cultural clubs, clubs, associations, etc.).
 - catering establishments not covered by a roof, permanent or temporary, and
 - catering establishments covered by a roof, with three (3) sides permanently open.
- The operation and use of bars inside and outside catering establishments is **exclusively limited to the preparation of food or drinks by the employees, and direct service from the bar is prohibited**, with the exception of cafes, where according to their operation, the public is served directly at the place of preparation of the drinks. The maximum number of persons in the indoor **waiting / service line should not exceed 10.**
- The public may be served **only in the outdoor areas of catering establishments.** The outdoor area is defined as any space that is **not indoor or enclosed and has sufficient natural oxygenation.** Adequate natural oxygenation exists in every area which:
 - is not covered by a roof, permanent or temporary, and
 - is covered by a roof, with three (3) sides permanently open.
- For outdoor areas, **the defined distance is 2 sq.m. per person.** For example, if a catering establishment has an outdoor area of 400 sq.m., it could serve up to 200 people, provided that the placement of the tables allows this number, in accordance with the protocol.

- The public may be served, **obligatorily and exclusively, while seated** at tables (seated only).
- The maximum number of **persons per table is 8**.
- Employees are obliged to **wear a mask** throughout the working time (excluding grill cooks).
- **Compulsory use of a mask by customers at all times** in the premises, as well as during movements within the establishment, except for the duration of active eating or drinking.
- **The operation of playgrounds** (indoor or outdoor) in catering establishments **is not permitted**.
- **Any kind of music** that promotes dancing as well as actual dancing by guests, **are forbidden**. Guests are not allowed to stand and dance around their table.

It should be noted that for a safe reopening, **an antigen rapid diagnostic test (rapid test) is mandatory for all catering employees before the reopening** and then on a **weekly basis, on the basis of the percentage corresponding** to the number of employees, as defined by the relevant Decree.

The responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the health protocol and the guidelines and measures in catering establishments has been assigned to the Deputy Ministry of Tourism, in cooperation with the Police.

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