

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Temporary changes in catering licenses to become permanent

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A Pennsylvania off-premises catering permit will hold more perks than it has in the past – permanently – after some recent changes in the law that regulates the permit.

Owners of a Pennsylvania off-premises catering permit have been enjoying extended benefits since late 2021. But with those benefits set to expire at the end of the year, Gov. Josh Shapiro in December signed [Act 51](#), which makes the changes permanent.

The changes removed some antiquated restrictions that now allow licensees to do more business, such as:

- Extending the time limit of any catered event from five hours to six hours, effective Jan. 1, 2025.
- Waiving the \$500 licensing fee. The fee is again waived for 2024 but will go back to \$500 per year to get the annual permit in 2025.
- Increasing the number of events. A licensee can cater an unlimited number of events per year, up from 52 previously, effective immediately.
- Eliminating the annual filing deadline for an off-premises catering permit, effective immediately. The previous deadline was March 1 for any year.
- Increasing the amount of self-sponsored events a catering club licensee may hold from 12 to 24 and events per month from one to two. This went into effect Feb. 12.

Gov. Tom Wolf had previously made these changes to the catering license, but the changes were meant to be temporary and set to expire at the end of 2024. The changes were made in late 2021 to help catering and restaurant businesses get back on their feet after a year-and-a-half of mass event cancellations due to the COVID pandemic.

The Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board also notes additional updates passed in subsequent acts that Gov. Shapiro signed:

- Licensed distilleries and limited distilleries may now sell an unlimited volume of liquor to other licensees and permit holders.
- Eligible hotel licensees may convert their license to a restaurant liquor license for a \$30,000 fee.

Pennsylvania lawmakers continue to listen to liquor license holders concerning some of the more outdated rules governing liquor licenses, including these latest changes. Any of the fears related to the COVID rule loosening – such as increased cases of alcoholism, police responses, DUIs, etc. – never materialized, which made it much easier for Shapiro to change the law permanently.

If you have any questions about the new rules or how they affect your business, please [contact me](#) or any of the attorneys in the [Saxton & Stump Liquor Licensing and Alcohol Group](#).

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