

# The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera County included in Trauma Service Area, TABC orders bars to close

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The Bandera Prophet

Bars that do not fall under the 51 percent rule of food versus alcohol are mandated to shut down. Covid patients now occupy more than 15 percent of area hospitals, which has triggered Executive Order GA-32. Bandera County Judge Richard Evans said this morning that he spoke with the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC), which confirmed bars must lock their doors unless they have a food license and generate at least 51 percent of its total revenue in food sales.

“How does Covid know whether you’re serving food or not,” Pct. 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris said. “Of course, I’m being facetious. But I’m pretty fed up with this crap right now.”

Bexar County officials issued an executive order that took effect at 11:59 p.m. Monday, and Kerr County closures will begin tomorrow. Bandera County Emergency Management Coordinator Carey Reed said Arkey Blues Silver Dollar Saloon is the only local bar that does not have a food license.

On Oct. 8, Governor Greg Abbott issued GA-32 to reopen bars and other venues to 75 percent capacity, and allow resumption of elective surgeries. Counties within TSAs that have high Covid hospitalizations were excluded.

Per GA-32, areas with high hospitalizations are defined as any TSA that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of Covid hospitalized patients exceeds 15 percent of capacity. Bandera County is in TSA P, which includes Bexar and 20 other counties.

The City of Bandera issued a statement that any facility ordered to close its indoor service may still offer to-go and curbside. All remaining facilities must reduce their capacity to 50 percent.

Earlier this month, Bandera County lost its mask exemption status when active Covid cases exceeded the state-issued limit of 30.

“Who enforces the mask rule?” Pct 4 Commissioner Jordan Rutherford said.

Sheriff Dan Butts said he has left enforcement up to individual establishments. He said if a customer refuses to wear a mask, and refuses to exit if asked, the Sheriff’s Office can make an arrest for trespassing. Otherwise, anyone with a complaint may simply leave on their own.

If someone has a complaint, they need to go to the proprietor, Butts said, adding if the proprietor does not handle it to their liking, the person complaining can choose to leave.

“It all comes down to personal responsibility, not executive orders,” Evans said.