



All Restrictions Lifted

There are currently no statewide mandates or restrictions that affect the operations of fairs, festivals or other events related to COVID-19. GOSA does not expect any to be implemented statewide. However, please continue to pay attention to any federal or local restrictions that might impact the operation of your business.

Catalytic Converter Legislation Introduced

Spurred to introduce legislation by the increase in theft of catalytic converters, Representative Bob Young (R), has introduced House Bill 408. Under the legislation, catalytic converters would be added to the list of “special purchase articles”. So, in order for them to be sold, proof of ownership would need to be presented. According to the sponsor in testimony given on November 10, 2021: *The seller who knowingly attempts to sell a catalytic converter without proof of ownership would have to be refused by the buyer, such as a scrap recycler. Or, said recycler would then be charged with receiving stolen property and/or complicity of the theft. The person selling would then be charged with theft, receipt, and/or complicity of theft of a stolen catalytic converter with enhanced penalties.*

“Business Fairness Act” Moves Closer to Passage

Legislation that failed to pass last year has been re-introduced. This time with a Senate companion bill. HB 215 sponsored by Reps. Shane Wilkin and Jon Cross and SB 134 sponsored by Senator George Lang are titled the “Business Fairness Act”. The bills basically says that health orders can’t close businesses if other businesses are allowed to stay open so long as they follow the safety precautions for those business permitted to continue to stay open. A prime example with this is flower shops. During the initial COVID shut down, flower shops were ordered closed. BUT you could still buy flowers at Walmart that was allowed to remain open, putting those other small businesses at a disadvantage. So, under this bill (if enacted) that small flower shop could stay open if they follow the protocols. Additionally, for amusement rides, the state allowed large amusement parks to open, but kept the portable ride industry shutdown.

The House Bill appears to be the vehicle for enactment. It was favorably passed by the House by a vote of 75-16. The Senate Small Business and Economic Opportunity Committee reported the bill on November 10, 2021. It now awaits a vote by the full Senate. The GOSA has submitted testimony in support of the legislation.

COVID Relief Bill

Another round of COVID relief dollars is expected to be considered by the legislature yet in 2021. A bill has not yet been introduced, so GOSA does not know if our member businesses will qualify for any grants or support. Other groups who did not receive relief grant opportunities in the past but may be eligible in the next rounds are ride companies and trade show producers.

Ride Safety Rules

The Ohio Department of Agriculture has released a package of rule revisions regarding amusement rides. By and large the changes are just updating code sections based on creating a stand-alone section of law for amusement rides in HB 665 last year. The only exception is creating a bit of an exemption for reporting changes to operation itineraries. A public hearing was held on the package on October 27, 2021.

(3) The permit holder shall report to the amusement ride safety division any changes, additions, or deletions to the itinerary at least ten days prior to the date the changes, additions, or deletions are scheduled to occur. Failure to report these changes to the amusement ride safety division prior to the ten-day restriction is a violation of this rule unless supporting documentation can be provided to show that an itinerary change or cancellation prior to the start of the event was not practical.

Additionally, GOSA is engaging ODAg on Tyler's Law and how it worked in practice over the 2021 season.

GOSA Continues to Comment on PIC Food Safety Rules

Over the last couple of years, the Ohio Department of Health has pursued a rule change to require mobile food vendors to have a person in charge certified. GOSA has consistently pushed back on the requirement. We did make some progress on the latest version of the rule, but GOSA is still not in a position to remove our opposition. Of most concern is the way the rule is currently written would require every mobile unit to have the PIC trained person. If a mobile food operator has multiple units on a fair or event midway, that would be overly burdensome on the owner. It will also increase challenges in being able to hire enough staff, an issue our members are already grappling with. GOSA would be less concerned if each mobile food operator or business had one person or the owner to get the training.

In addition to submitting comments to the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Department of Agriculture, GOSA's representative has also communicated business impact concerns to the Common Sense Initiative.

This rule could be up for discussion at the next Retail Food Safety Advisory Council Meeting on November 16, 2021.

Minimum Wage to Increase in 2022

Per an Ohio constitutional amendment passed several years ago, Ohio's minimum wage is re-adjusted annually based on inflation. Starting in 2022, the state minimum wage will be \$9.30 an hour. Currently the rate is \$8.80 an hour.

Youth Employment Bill Introduced

Senator Tim Schaffer (R) and Senator Tina Maharath (D) have introduced Senate Bill 251 regarding youth employment. The bill would allow those under 16 to be employed after 7pm during school year. It would state that with parent or guardian's permission, those under 16 could work until 9pm. This bill will be considered by the Senate Workforce and Higher Education Committee. A sponsor hearing is scheduled for October 20, 2021. The GOSA Board has voted to support this legislation.

Fireworks Bill Signed

Legislation to legalize the discharge of consumer fireworks has been introduced and considered for years. Senate Bill 113 sponsored by Senators Michael Rulli and Dr. Terry Johnson made it across the finish line in 2021 passing both the House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate. Governor DeWine elected to veto the legislation. The bill did pass both the House and Senate with wide enough margins to override the veto. The legislature however took another route. They passed the House version of the proposal, House Bill 172, with some modifications from the Senate version. For example, they slightly narrowed the days in which fireworks would be permitted to be set off. The Governor did sign this version on November 8th. Since the bill contained an emergency clause, it took effect immediately. The bill does allow local communities to impose stricter regulations or ban the discharge all together.

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