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Iowa law sets new rules for food delivery apps

MAY 31, 2022 BY [O. KAY HENDERSON](#)

A new state law is establishing new restrictions on food delivery apps like Uber Eats, Grubhub and DoorDash.

The companies must have an agreement with a restaurant, bar or diner before their drivers can deliver food and beverages from that business. Jessica Dunker, president and C-E-O of the Iowa Restaurant Association, says that will hopefully stop what the restaurant industry calls pirating.

"It doesn't let a third party delivery service just take Mike's logo and take Mike's menu and put it in their mobile app because a consumer believes you have a relationship and Mike might not have any idea of who it is," Dunker says. "It also has a certain amount of liability because if somebody runs over someone with a car, it isn't Mike's fault."

The law establishes food safety standards for delivery drivers, too.

"You can't have your pets or your sick children or smoke or vape in the car and that you have a bag that keeps something the temperature it's supposed to be," Dunker says. "I mean, it's really, really basic."

Perhaps most basic of all — the food delivery companies will face fines if drivers are caught eating some of the food they're supposed to be delivering.

"There is a study. It was conducted by US Foods where they reached out to delivery drivers all over the country and found out 28% of them admitted to, at least once, trying the food before they delivered it," Dunker says. "We always laugh about this with the association because 28% said: 'yes,' but a percentage of them probably thought: 'I shouldn't answer this as yes' on that survey."

Dunker says food third party delivery services really didn't really help restaurants during the depths of the pandemic and restaurants aren't making money on food order through a delivery app. Restaurants are sometimes charged commissions of up to 30% on food delivery orders.

"Go pick up your food. We would love to have you have carry out. We will bring it to your car. It's so much better from safety, from cost," Dunker says. "Just pick up your food."

Dunker made her comments during a recent appearance on "Iowa Press" on Iowa PBS.

Some major cities have started regulating what food delivery services may charge restaurants. The companies say their apps are a marketing opportunity, giving restaurants another platform to reach new customers and find new revenue.

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