

Making Fast-Food Drive Thru Services Accessible for Customers Who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing receive and relay information differently than hearing people. While some individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing may be able to voice words, others may not. They may need to use the written word or pictures so that they can order food at a fast food restaurant drive-thru.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, many fast food restaurants are closing their dine-in areas and only offering drive-thru services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that drive-thru services be accessible to individuals with disabilities, including individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. This means that fast food restaurants must make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, and procedures to ensure deaf and hard of hearing customers receive equal access to drive-thru services and are not treated differently from hearing customers.

With this in mind, **DRT requests that fast food restaurants do the following to make their drive-thru services accessible** to customers who are deaf and hard of hearing, while being mindful of health and safety precautions:

- Allow deaf and hard of hearing customers to order at the window instead of at the designated intercom;
- Post signs at all designated drive-thru intercoms stating that deaf and hard of hearing individuals may pull their cars around to the window for service;
- Allow deaf and hard of hearing customers to write down their orders on a piece of paper or on their phones and hold it up for the restaurant employee to see;
- Allow deaf and hard of hearing customers to show pictures of the food they wish to order;
- Provide deaf and hard of hearing customers with written or picture menus in which they can write out or circle what food they would like to order; and
- Allow deaf and hard of hearing customers to use methods similar to those listed above to communicate payment information.

Thank you for helping to make fast food drive-thru services accessible to customers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stacie L. Price, DRT Attorney at staciep@disabilityrightstn.org or 615.732.6982.

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800.342.1660 | www.disabilityrightstn.org | gethelp@disabilityrightstn.org