



City of Boston  
Mayor Michelle Wu  
Licensing Board

Commissioners:  
Kathleen M. Joyce, Chairman  
Keeana S. Saxon  
Liam P. Curran  
Executive Secretary:  
Daniel R. Green

**THE LICENSING BOARD FOR THE CITY OF BOSTON'S ADVISORY  
REGARDING CLOSED CAPTIONING ON PUBLIC FACING TELEVISIONS**

Issued: March 2, 2023

On December 9, 2022, Mayor Michelle Wu signed an ordinance requiring that places of public accommodation in the City of Boston, including restaurants and bars, must turn on the closed captioning function on any television in use in any public area during regular hours (the "Ordinance"). The Licensing Board for the City of Boston (the "Board") issues this advisory (the "Advisory") applicable to establishments holding an annual entertainment license, a common victualler license, an alcoholic beverages license, or a series of special one day licenses (the "Licensee" or "Licensees").

1. All Licensees, other than those specifically exempted by the Ordinance, must utilize the closed captioning function on all public-facing televisions during all hours of operation.
2. Licensees are required to utilize the closed captioning function even if televisions are kept on mute.
3. The Ordinance does not require captions in languages other than English. Enabling closed captions in any language that serves the Licensee's patrons will be considered compliance with the Ordinance.
4. Licensees will not be found in violation of the Ordinance if their public-facing televisions do not have closed captioning.
5. "Public entertainment venues," defined as places that are open to the public for mass gathering for entertainment, are exempt from the Ordinance. Such venues include, but are not limited to, cinemas, theaters, concert halls, sports centers, and festivals.
6. Primary enforcement of the Ordinance will be through the investigative powers of the City of Boston Disabilities Commission. The Disabilities Commission may refer instances of repeated or egregious noncompliance to the Entertainment Division of the Mayor's Office of Consumer Affairs and Licensing ("MOCAL") to conduct further investigation or hearings relative to any temporary or annual license covering the noncompliant television(s).

**Claims of ignorance of the law, the Guidance, or the Advisory are not a defense.**

Please refer to [boston.gov/disability](https://www.boston.gov/disability) for more information on the Ordinance and how to comply. Any questions should be directed to the Board's Executive Secretary, Daniel R. Green, Esq., who can be reached at (617) 635-4170 or [danny.green@boston.gov](mailto:danny.green@boston.gov).

For the Board,

*Daniel R. Green*

Daniel R. Green, Esq.  
Executive Secretary