Bars in Rwanda will be required to close at 1:00 am from Monday through Friday and at 2:00 am from Saturday and Sunday, according to the new regulations by the government.

As stipulated in the new guidelines published by Rwanda Development Board (RDB), all public commercial events venues, entertainment centers, conferences centers, bars, restaurants, and nightclubs need to comply.

Hotel services can remain open for in-house guests only, while other establishments such as pharmacies, supermarkets, factories, call centers may continue to operate within existing rules and regulations.

Marie Claire Umuhoza who owns a bar in Kayonza district says that the new guidelines will help to prohibit the sell of alcohol to minors, and those who drink will take alcohol at the right time, the right place and required place.

“In rural communities, people wake up very early in the morning to go to bars to take alcohol produced locally because it is cheap and they’re unemployed, when they’re high, they end up fighting, so the new regulation will bring in some new order” She notes adding that, at the same time will affect their formal businesses in terms of working hours.

Hussein Dusabe a driver explains that the new guidelines are intended to reduce drunk driving and the sell of alcohol to vulnerable groups below the age of 18 years which is spinning out of control.

“Government should impose heavy penalties to bars and people who sell alcohol to the vulnerable, and those caught in bar drinking beyond the fixed time” , he adds.

The RDB said establishments may request for authorization to open after hours in case they have special events, concerts or other valid reasons.

According to the latest World Health Organization data published in 2020 alcohol deaths in Rwanda reached 125 or 0.22 percent of total deaths. The age adjusted Death Rate is 1.99 per 100,000 of population ranks Rwanda #60 in the world.