

Blackwater Distilling Shifts Production from Spirits to Sanitizer

Maryland's Eastern Shore in Desperate Need of Hand Sanitizer

KENT ISLAND, MD (April 5, 2020)— On a typical spring Saturday, **Blackwater Distilling** on Kent Island is buzzing with staff and volunteers bottling the brand's award-winning Sloop Betty vodka. This Saturday, a skeleton crew worked feverishly to fill 50-gallon drums with hand sanitizer for the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

Two weeks ago, the nine-year-old distillery stopped offering tours and tastings at the direction of Maryland Governor Larry Hogan in an effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. The locally-owned business is able to sell craft beer and cocktail growlers, along with their bottled spirits including vodka and whiskey, with curbside pick-up from their tavern just off Route 50 but visits to the distillery have been suspended. With plenty of spirits on the shelf, and a little bit of free time, the family wanted to do something to help those on the front line. It turns out, when supplies are available, a distillery can pretty easily be turned around for hand sanitizer production.

“Early in March our production manager mentioned that we should start looking into how to make hand sanitizer,” said Blackwater Distilling partner Chris Cook. “It wasn't long after that we began hearing reports that sanitizer was in low supply. The recipe is pretty simple, and ten days later we had a batch of high-octane sanitizer.”

The sanitizer produced by Blackwater Distilling follows World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and includes glycerin to help prevent chapped hands. The alcohol content, per WHO direction, is 80% - much higher than typical consumer grade sanitizer.

“The challenging part is securing simple supplies and working around price-gouging for shipping,” added Cook. “Right now, we are only able to supply first responders, government agencies and medical facilities. In the next week we hope to be able to secure additional supplies and small bottles that will allow us to supply even more of our neighbors.”

Blackwater Distilling Tavern

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About Blackwater Distilling

Blackwater Distilling is located on scenic Kent Island, Maryland and has been producing high-quality, master crafted spirits since 2011. Family-owned by the Cook brothers, Christopher and Jonathan, Blackwater Distilling is Maryland's first fully-licensed alcohol distillery since 1972. Blackwater Distilling is also the state's most decorated, having received dozens of awards for its incredible line-up of vodkas, rums, whiskeys and specialty spirits. Blackwater Distilling uses organic or local ingredients whenever possible for its unparalleled quality and taste. Visit blackwaterdistilling.com or follow the company on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).