

HR Tracker, ¶46,791, Kentucky governor orders non-life-sustaining businesses to close — STATE LAW, (Mar. 30, 2020)

Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear on Wednesday, March 25, 2020, tightened restrictions on businesses and banned residential evictions under a state of emergency declaration aimed at addressing the ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic. The Governor offered details about the new Executive Order as he warned against complacency in Kentucky's fight against the COVID-19 outbreak.

Executive Order No. 2020-257 expands efforts to limit in-person contacts to help prevent the spread of the virus. Beginning at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 26, all non-life-sustaining businesses must close to in-person services.

Exempted businesses include grocery stores, gas stations, hardware stores and media outlets, among many others. The sale of firearms and ammunition also is exempted.

In addition, to protect Kentuckians whose livelihoods have been affected by the coronavirus response, Gov. Beshear ordered a halt to all residential evictions as long as the state of emergency remains in effect.

Unemployment insurance expanded

The Governor said unemployment eligibility has been expanded effective immediately due to COVID-19. Individuals typically not covered by unemployment insurance, including self-employed, independent contractors, freelance workers, substitute teachers, childcare workers employed by religious affiliated organizations and non-profits can now file. Those who left their job for "good cause" because of reasonable risk of exposure (self-quarantine) or due to caring for a family member affected by the virus are also eligible.

All non-life-sustaining businesses close to in-person service

Effective on Thursday, March 26, at 8 p.m., all non-life-sustaining businesses are being told to cease all in-person services.

La Tasha Buckner, the Governor's chief of staff and general counsel, provided additional information on the new executive order. "We want everyone to be Healthy at Home, which means we want you to go to the grocery store, bank and pharmacy, but what we don't want you to do is stay in the bank or a grocery store just to be out of the house," said Buckner. "As you need those things, please go there and spend the minimum time you need to get what you need and move on."

The businesses that can stay open include: grocery stores, drug stores and pharmacies, banks, hardware stores, agricultural operations, gas stations, media, businesses needed for transportation, logistics, shipping, delivery and pick up, housing, building and construction, laundry, financial services, home-based care and services, professional services, manufacturing and other businesses key to national interests or life-sustaining goods or services, and those covered under the federal critical infrastructure sector.

Most professional services, including attorneys, accountants and those in real estate, can be performed at home. As the Governor has said previously, restaurants can remain open for delivery, curbside pickup and even carry out if they follow guidelines on social distancing.

In addition, Governor Beshear announced the COVID-19 Reporting Hotline (833-597-2337) that will investigate complaints about non-compliance with coronavirus mandates. Labor Cabinet personnel will monitor the hotline from 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET. A new website where Kentuckians can visit to make online complaints is kysafer.ky.gov.

Source: State of Kentucky, Office of the Governor, Press Release, March 25, 2020.