

## **HR Tracker, ¶46,794, Massachusetts governor orders non-essential businesses to close, directs Department of Health to issue stay-at-home advisory — STATE LAW, (Mar. 30, 2020)**

Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued an emergency order on March 23, 2020, requiring all businesses and organizations that do not provide “COVID-19 Essential Services” to close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public as of Tuesday, March 24th at noon until Tuesday, April 7th at noon. These businesses are encouraged to continue operations remotely.

The Baker-Polito Administration issued a list of designated businesses and other organizations that provide essential services and workforces related to COVID-19 that shall continue to operate brick and mortar facilities during this two-week time period. This list is based on federal guidance and amended to reflect the needs of Massachusetts’ unique economy. While these businesses are designated as essential, they are urged to follow social distancing protocols for workers in accordance with guidance from the Department of Public Health.

Businesses and organizations not on the list of essential services are encouraged to continue operations through remote means that do not require workers, customers, or the public to enter or appear at the brick-and-mortar premises closed by the order.

Restaurants, bars, and other establishments that sell food and beverage products to the public are encouraged to continue to offer food for take-out and by delivery if they follow the social distancing protocols set forth in Department of Public Health guidance. On-premises consumption of food or drink is prohibited.

Due to evolving spread of COVID-19 in Massachusetts, Governor Baker has directed the Department of Public Health to issue a stay at home advisory outlining self-isolation and social distancing protocols. Residents are advised to stay home and avoid unnecessary travel and other unnecessary activities during this two-week time period. Residents over 70 years of age or with underlying health conditions, who are considered at high risk when exposed to COVID-19, should limit social interactions with other people as much as possible.

The Baker-Polito Administration does not believe Massachusetts residents can be confined to their homes and does not support home confinement for public health reasons.

The Administration Order also limits gatherings to 10 people during the state of emergency, a reduction from the 25 person limit established in an earlier order. This includes community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, and any similar event or activity that brings together more than 10 persons in any confined indoor or outdoor space. The order does not prohibit gatherings of more than 10 people in an outdoor space, like a park or athletic field.

**Source:** Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Office of the Governor, Press Release, March 23, 2020.