

## HR Tracker, ¶46,795, Montana governor issues stay at home directive to slow speed of COVID-19 — STATE LAW, (Mar. 30, 2020)

Montana Governor Steve Bullock on March 26, 2020, issued a Directive requiring Montanans to stay home and temporarily closes all nonessential businesses and operations to curtail the spread of COVID-19. The order, which goes into effect at 12:01 a.m. on March 28, will buy time for health care workers on the frontlines and seeks to limit long term impacts to the state's economy.

"In consultation with public health experts, health care providers, and emergency management professionals, I have determined that to protect public health and human safety, it is essential, to the maximum extent possible, individuals stay at home or at their place of residence," said Governor Bullock. "There's no doubt that COVID-19 is causing a lot of hardship. It's also causing incredible hardships for our frontline doctors, nurses and other hospital staff across the country."

The Directive will be in effect through Friday, April 10 and requires all businesses and operations in Montana, except for essential businesses and operations as defined in the directive, to stop all activities within the state.

The Directive also prohibits all public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a household or place of residence.

"I am taking these measures today because we need to stay in front of this pandemic and slow the growth of infections. In order to have a healthy economy we need a healthy population. We cannot rebuild our economic strength without doing everything we can now to flatten the curve and slow the spread of this virus," continued Governor Bullock.

Essential services and businesses will remain operational and open. Businesses deemed essential are required to comply with social distancing guidelines when possible including maintaining six feet of distance, having sanitizing products available, and designating hours of operation specifically for vulnerable populations.

Under the directive, Montanans may leave their homes for essential activities, including:

- **For health and safety.** To engage in activities or perform tasks essential to their health and safety, or to the health and safety of their family or household members (including, but not limited to, pets), such as, by way of example only and without limitation, seeking emergency services, obtaining medical supplies or medication, or visiting a health care professional.
- **For necessary supplies and services.** To obtain necessary services or supplies for themselves and their family or household members, or to deliver those services or supplies to others, such as, by way of example only and without limitation, groceries and food, household consumer products, supplies they need to work from home, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences
- **For outdoor activity.** To engage in outdoor activity, provided the individuals comply with social distancing, as defined below, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, running, or biking. Individuals may go to public parks and open outdoor recreation areas, including public lands in Montana provided they remain open to recreation. Montanans are discouraged from outdoor recreation activities that pose enhanced risks of injury or could otherwise stress the ability of local first responders to address the COVID-19 emergency (e.g., backcountry skiing in a manner inconsistent with avalanche recommendations or in closed terrain).
- **For certain types of work.** To perform work providing essential products and services at Essential Businesses or Operations or to otherwise carry out activities specifically permitted in this Directive, including Minimum Basic Operations.
- **To take care of others.** To care for a family member, friend, or pet in another household, and to transport family members, friends, or pets as allowed by this Directive.

The Directive follows federal guidance to determine the businesses and operations deemed essential, which are summarized in the Directive.

Businesses with questions can contact a dedicated state line at 1-800-755-6672 and leave messages 24-hours a day and will receive a prompt response.

**Source:** State of Montana, Office of the Governor, Press Release, March 26, 2020.