

## **HR Tracker, ¶46,781, Gov. Scott orders closure of in-person operations for all non-essential businesses — STATE LAW, (Mar. 27, 2020)**

Vermont Governor Phil Scott on March 24, 2020, issued a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Order and directed the closure of in-person operations for all non-essential businesses.

These restrictive measures are in place to minimize all unnecessary activities outside the home to slow the spread of this virus and protect the public. These actions were implemented in consultation with the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Health and his evaluation of the latest data.

The Governor’s order directs Vermonters to stay at home, leaving only for essential reasons, critical to health and safety. If leaving the home, Vermonters should adhere to social distancing policies, including remaining six feet from others (except for those with whom they share a home) and thoroughly and regularly washing hands.

Effective March 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., all businesses and not-for-profit entities not expressly exempted in the order must suspend all in-person business operations. Operations that can be conducted online or by phone, or sales that can be facilitated with curbside pickup or delivery only, can continue.

Workers are directed to work remotely when possible.

The Order provides exemptions for businesses and entities providing services or functions deemed critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. This includes—but is not limited to—health care operations; retail serving essential human needs, like grocery stores, pharmacies and hardware stores; fuel products and supply; news media; maintenance of critical infrastructure; and transportation and critical manufacturing sectors. For a full list of exemptions, see the order.

All exempt entities must still strictly adhere to CDC and Vermont Department of Health guidance to ensure social distancing and proper hygiene and disinfecting is occurring. All exempt entities conducting retail operations should also facilitate curbside pick-up or delivery to the extent possible.

“I fully recognize the emotional, financial and economic impact of these decisions, but based on the best science we have available, these measures are necessary,” said Governor Scott. “I need all Vermonters to understand that the more quickly and closely we follow these stay-at-home measures, the faster and safer we can get through this and get our daily lives, and our economy, moving again. I have tremendous faith in Vermonters and our ability to follow these guidelines, to save lives and support each other throughout—even as we are physical separated.”

Governor Scott declared a State of Emergency on March 13, and has since directed a number of mitigation strategies in order to reduce close contact among individuals, including visitor restrictions for long-term care facilities and other health facilities; the closure of bars and restaurants, schools and day care centers and close contact businesses; limiting the size of mass gatherings; postponing all non-essential medical procedures; and ordering all businesses to implement telecommuting wherever possible.

The Stay Home, Stay Safe order will be in effect until April 15, 2020, though may be extended or shortened as needed. For full details, please click here to read the full addendum.

Commercial entities, non-profits, employers and others with questions about acceptable continuation of business operations should contact the Agency of Commerce and Community Development via this online form.

For the latest information and guidance relating to Vermont’s COVID-19 response, visit here.

**Source:** State of Vermont, Office of the Governor, Press Release, March 24, 2020.