

Governor Wolf Orders Closure of Non-Life Sustaining Businesses

Posted on Thursday March 19, 2020

All Non-Life-Sustaining Businesses in Pennsylvania ordered to close at 8 p.m. on Thursday, 2020, to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Wolf Administration Orders Closure of Non-Life-Sustaining Businesses at 8 p.m., March 19, 2020. Enforcement Actions for Restaurant, Bar Dine-In Closure Began at 8 p.m., March 19, 2020. Enforcement Actions for Non-Compliance will Begin at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, March 21, 2020.

Governor Tom Wolf ordered all non-life-sustaining businesses in Pennsylvania to close their physical locations at 8 p.m., March 19, to slow the spread of COVID-19. Enforcement actions against businesses that do not have physical locations will begin at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, March 21.

Gov. Wolf's order is [here](#).

A video statement from Gov. Wolf is [here](#).

Sec. of Health's order is [here](#).

A list of life-sustaining businesses is [here](#).

In extenuating circumstances, special exemptions will be granted to businesses that are supplying or providing health care providers.

"To protect the health and safety of all Pennsylvanians, we need to take more aggressive mitigation actions," Gov. Wolf said. "This virus is an invisible danger that could be present everywhere. We need to act with the same urgency we use against any other severe threat. And, we need to act now before the illness spreads more widely."

The governor had previously encouraged non-life-sustaining businesses to close to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Restaurants and bars were already required to stop all dine-in services. Enforcement for establishments with a liquor license began at 8 p.m. March 18, and enforcement for all other food establishments will begin tonight. Food establishments can offer carry-out, delivery, and drive-through food and beverage services, but not alcohol.

Pursuant to the Emergency Management Services Code, the governor is granted extraordinary powers in a declaration of a disaster emergency, such as COVID-19. Among these powers, the governor may control ingress and egress into the disaster area, the movement of persons, and the occupancy of premises within the disaster area, which has been established to be the entire commonwealth for the COVID-19 disaster emergency. The secretary of health separately is authorized under the law to employ measures necessary for the prevention and suppression of disease.

Separately, and taken together, the administration is exercising these powers to temporarily close all non-life-sustaining businesses and dine-in facilities at all restaurants and bars across the commonwealth. Personnel may be removed from these premises to cope with the COVID-19 disaster emergency.

Failure to Comply and Enforcement

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in enforcement action that could include citations license suspensions.

The governor has directed the following state agencies and local officials to enforce the closure order extent of the law:

- Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board
- Department of Health
- Department of Agriculture
- Pennsylvania State Police
- Local officials, using their resources to enforce closure orders within their jurisdictions

Private businesses, local organizations and other noncompliant entities that fail or refuse to comply w governor's orders that protect the lives and health of Pennsylvanians will forfeit their ability to receive applicable disaster relief and/or may be subject to other appropriate administrative action. Such action include termination of state loan or grant funding, including Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project grant funding and/or suspension or revocation of licensure for violation of the law.

Finally, in addition to any other criminal charges that might be applicable, the Department of Health is to prosecute noncompliant entities for the failure to comply with health laws, including quarantine, iso other disease control measures. Violators are subject to fines or imprisonment.

Business Loans and Support

The Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) offers working capital loans that assistance to businesses impacted by COVID-19. Resources and information will be posted to <http://dced.pa.gov/resources> as they become available. The U.S. Small Business Administration, in a local funding partners, may also be a source of assistance for affected businesses.

The Wolf Administration today announced the availability of low-interest loans for small businesses and non-profits in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Businesses seeking guidance from DCED can also contact its customer service resource account at dcedcs@pa.gov or by calling 1-877-PA-HEALTH and selecting option 1.

For the most up-to-date information on COVID-19, Pennsylvanians should visit:

<https://www.pa.gov/guides/responding-to-covid-19/>.

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