

Pennsylvania Governor Orders All Non-Life-Sustaining Businesses To Close

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In the late afternoon of Thursday, March 19, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf issued an Order requiring that all non-life sustaining businesses close their physical locations by 8:00 p.m. that evening. This Order came shortly after the news that COVID-19 claimed its first death in Pennsylvania (in North Hampton County).

Under the March 19, 2020 Order, “No person or entity shall operate a place of business in the Commonwealth that is not a life sustaining business regardless of whether the business is open to members of the public.” The Order does not preclude businesses from operating virtually or through their implemented telework operations, so long as social distancing and other mitigating measures are followed.

Businesses deemed to be “life-sustaining” may remain open but are ordered to, at a minimum, follow the social distancing directives previously issued.

Enforcement action begins on Saturday, March 21 at 12:01 a.m. and will include citations, fines, and license suspensions for non-compliance.

Restaurants and bars are still ordered to close their dine-in facilities, but they can remain open for carry-out, delivery, and drive-through — so long as social distancing is maintained. Enforcement actions for restaurants and bars began on March 19 at 8:00 p.m.

Businesses previously allowed to keep their doors open that now must close include: law firms, CPA firms and tax businesses, and certain manufacturers. A list of businesses that are and are not deemed “life-sustaining” can be found [here](#).

A copy of the Governor’s Order can be found [here](#).

Official answers on the close-or-not-to-close quandary can be found by emailing gracedcds@pa.gov. Waivers and exemptions to the closure order can be sought through RA-dcexemption@pa.gov.

Jackson Lewis has a dedicated team tracking and responding to the developing issues facing employers in this difficult time. If you need guidance in handling the complicated issues pertaining to COVID-19, contact a Jackson Lewis attorney to discuss.

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