

Puerto Rico Clarifies Applicability to Private Sector Employers of Mandatory Lockdown

By Juan Felipe Santos and Sara E. Colón-Acevedo

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The Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce has issued a clarification on the mandatory lockdown of non-essential commerce in response to employer appeals.

On the night of March 17, the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce, Hon. Manuel A. J. Laboy-Rivera, issued Circular Letter No. 2020-02, "Applicability of the Close of Operations in the Private Sector Pursuant to Executive Order No. EO-2020023," in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

EO 2020-023 orders a drastic lockdown of non-essential commerce and mandatory round-the-clock curfews until March 30, 2020, among other measures targeted toward detaining the spread of COVID-19 in Puerto Rico (see our article, [Puerto Rico Goes on Lockdown, Imposes Mandatory Curfew in Response to Outbreak of COVID-19](#)).

Many employers were unclear on whether they are authorized to operate during the lockdown. In addition to aiming to clarify which businesses can operate during the lockdown period, Circular Letter No. 2020-02 includes an email address for inquiries from employers on whether their operation falls within the exemptions of food, health, or national security: emergencias@ddec.pr.gov.

Given the rapidly changing situation, businesses must prepare. Jackson Lewis attorneys and the dedicated [COVID-19 Task Force](#) are ready to assist with any questions.

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Meet the Authors



Juan Felipe Santos

Office Managing Principal and Office
Litigation Manager
San Juan
787-522-7315
Email



Sara E. Colón-Acevedo

Principal
San Juan
787-522-7310
Email

Practices

Disability, Leave and Health
Management

Services

COVID-19