

Virginia Governor Orders Temporary Restrictions on Certain Businesses, Closure of K-12 Schools

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Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has announced [Executive Order Number Fifty-Three](#), putting into place temporary restrictions on restaurants, recreational, entertainment, gatherings, and non-essential retail business. The Order closes K-12 schools for the rest of the school year, becoming the second state, behind Kansas, to do so. This Order goes into effect on 11:59 p.m. on March 24, 2020, and will remain in effect until April 23, 2020.

The Governor ordered the closure of all dining and congregation areas in restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, tasting rooms, and farmers markets. Although, restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, tasting rooms, and farmers markets may continue to offer delivery and take-out services.

He also ordered the closure of all public access to recreational and entertainment businesses, to include:

- Theaters, performing arts centers, concert venues, museums, and other indoor entertainment centers;
- Fitness centers, gymnasiums, recreation centers, indoor sports facilities, and indoor exercise facilities;
- Beauty salons, barbershops, spas, massage parlors, tanning salons, tattoo shops, and any other location where personal care or personal grooming services are performed that would not allow compliance with social distancing guidelines to remain six feet apart;
- Racetracks and historic horse racing facilities; and
- Bowling alleys, skating rinks, arcades, amusement parks, trampoline parks, fairs, arts and craft facilities, aquariums, zoos, escape rooms, indoor shooting ranges, public and private social clubs, and all other places of indoor public amusement.

Essential retail businesses may remain open during their normal business hours. Essential retail businesses are defined as:

- Grocery stores, pharmacies, and other retailers that sell food and beverage products or pharmacy products, including dollar stores, and department stores with grocery or pharmacy operations;
- Medical, laboratory, and vision supply retailers;
- Electronic retailers that sell or service cell phones, computers, tablets, and other communications technology;
- Automotive parts, accessories, and tire retailers as well as automotive repair facilities;
- Home improvement, hardware, building material, and building supply retailers;
- Lawn and garden equipment retailers;
- Beer, wine, and liquor stores;
- Retail functions of gas stations and convenience stores;
- Retail located within healthcare facilities;
- Banks and other financial institutions with retail functions;
- Pet and feeds
- Printing and office supply stores; and
- Laundromats and dry cleaners.

Further, any brick-and-mortar retail business that is not an essential retail business may continue to operate, but must limit all in-person shopping to no more than 10 patrons per establishment with proper social distancing requirements. If any such business cannot adhere to these restrictions, it must close. Businesses offering professional services may remain open, but they were instructed to utilize teleworking

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as much as possible, such businesses must adhere to social distancing recommendations and other workplace guidance from authorities.

Governor Northam also ordered the closure of all K-12 schools and limited daycare operations to groups no larger than 10 and instructed stringent public health guidelines be followed and encouraged daycare space to be prioritized for all essential personnel with daycare needs.

He did not limit: (a) the provision of health care or medical services; (b) access to essential services for low-income residents, such as food banks; (c) operations of the media; (d) law enforcement agencies; or (e) the operation of government.

Violations of the Order will be a Class 1 misdemeanor.

The COVID-19 situation remains fluid. If you need guidance in handling the complicated issues pertaining to COVID-19, please contact a Jackson Lewis attorney.

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