

Louisiana Joins Other States in Issuing a ‘Stay at Home’ Order

March 23, 2020

Related Services

COVID-19

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Reductions-in-Force/WARN Act

Workplace Safety and Health

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards has issued a [Statewide Stay at Home Order](#) limiting the activities of all Louisianans.

Effective March 23, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. (Central Standard Time) and extending to April 13 (unless terminated sooner), Proclamation Number 33 JBE 2020:

1. Closes of all state office buildings;
2. Prohibits gatherings of 10 or more;
3. Directs all citizens to stay home unless performing an “essential activity”;
4. Directs the closure of additional businesses, including places of amusement and grooming; and
5. Orders any non-essential businesses that remain in operation to reduce operations to minimize contact with the public.

Section 1: Closure of State Office Buildings

While essential state functions will continue, all state office buildings are closed to the public. Operations at state courthouses were curtailed by the Governor’s previous proclamations and this latest Proclamation likely will further affect court appearances (individual court and parish websites will give details).

Section 2: Limitation on Gatherings to Fewer than 10

Gatherings of 10 or more individuals are prohibited. However, the Proclamation makes clear that individuals can still go outside, so long as they are not “in close proximity to one another.”

Further, the ban does not apply to normal operations at airports, medical facilities, grocery stores, or offices/factories/manufacturers still operating.

Section 3: Stay-at-Home Order

After the Proclamation goes into effect, Louisiana residents may leave their homes only for the following reasons:

1. Obtaining food, medicine, and other necessary goods.
2. Obtaining non-elective medical care and treatment and other similar vital services.
3. Traveling to and from work to perform job functions necessary to provide the goods or services described above (*i.e.*, provide food, medicine, medical care, and so on), or otherwise deemed essential (the Proclamation points to the [Department of Homeland Security’s guidance](#) on identifying what work is essential).
4. Going to and from a family member’s home.
5. Going to and from a place of worship.
6. Engaging in an outdoor activity, so long as the person abides by the 10-person limitation on gathering size and maintains a six-foot distance from others.

Section 4: Closure of Additional Businesses

The Governor's previous proclamations ordered all K-12 public schools, casinos, bars, movie theatres, and gyms closed and restricted restaurants to take-out, drive-through, and delivery orders only.

This latest Proclamation expands that closure to include places of public amusement (for example, zoos, aquariums, museums, playgrounds, racetracks, and theaters), personal care and grooming businesses (such as barber shops and nail salons), and all malls (except stores located in a mall with a direct outdoor entrance and exit and that provide essential services and products). The Proclamation makes clear that these businesses may continue to perform necessary activities (such as cleaning, payroll, and maintenance) during the closure.

Section 5: Restriction on Remaining Business Operations

Any additional businesses not closed by the Proclamation, and that are not essential under Section 3, must reduce operations to minimize contact between the public and essential employees and encourage social distancing. Further, these businesses are subject to the limitation on gatherings described in Section 2 (*i.e.*, fewer than 10 people gathered together). Early learning and childcare centers are expressly permitted under this Section to continue to operate.

Implications

Temporary or permanent job loss for many Louisianans may result. The Louisiana Workforce Commission has made changes to the unemployment benefits program to assist those whose jobs are affected by COVID-19. Those who may qualify for unemployment include:

1. Workers whose hours were reduced because of lack of work due to coronavirus;
2. Employees who are not being compensated despite their workplace temporarily closing; and
3. Employees instructed not to go to work and who are not being paid while at home.

Affected employees may file a claim online at www.louisianaworks.net/hire/ or by calling the claim center at 866-783-5567. They must answer "yes" to the question "are you filing for unemployment insurance benefits for reasons related to COVID-19 (coronavirus)?"

Business closures may implicate the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act and, even on such short notice, care must be taken with handling reductions in force, furloughs, and other closures.

Please let a Jackson Lewis attorney if you need assistance handling the complicated issues pertaining to COVID-19 and the Governor's Proclamation.

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