

EMPLOYMENT LAWSCENE ALERT: WISCONSIN AND CITY OF MILWAUKEE SAFER AT HOME ORDERS ISSUED - EFFECTIVE MARCH 25, 2020

The State of Wisconsin has issued a statewide Safer at Home Order, which will become effective at 8:00 a.m. on March 25, 2020, and will remain in effect until 8:00 a.m. on Friday, April 24, 2020, or until a superseding order is issued. The full text of the Order can be found [here](#).

The Order requires all businesses in Wisconsin, except businesses the Order defines to be Essential Businesses and Operations, to cease all activities except Minimum Basic Operations. Essential Businesses and Operations means Healthcare and Public Health Operations, Human Services Operations, Essential Infrastructure, and 26 other categories of businesses. Healthcare Operations, which include hospitals, dental offices, eye care centers, personal care agencies, massage therapists, chiropractors, and veterinary care, among other entities, are exempt from the Order, so those businesses may remain open. Essential Infrastructure may also remain open, including, but not limited to, food production, distribution, and sale; certain types of [construction](#); building management and maintenance; airport operations; operation and maintenance of utilities; and internet, video, and telecommunication systems.

Some of the other businesses and industries that qualify as Essential Businesses and Operations include stores that sell groceries and medicine; food and beverage production, transport, and agriculture; organizations that provide charitable and social services; gas stations and businesses needed for transportation; financial institutions and services; hardware and supplies stores; critical trades, including, but not limited to, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, cleaning and janitorial staff for commercial government properties, security staff, HVAC, and moving companies; bars and restaurants for consumption off-premises; supplies to work from home; supplies for Essential Businesses and Operations; transportation; home-based care and services; professional services such as legal, accounting, insurance, and real estate services; child care, subject to the March 18, 2020, DHS limitations; and manufacturing, distribution, and supply chain for critical products and industries.

Essential Businesses and Operations are encouraged to remain open, and to the greatest

extent possible, should comply with social distancing requirements, including maintaining a six-foot distance from others, and use technology to avoid meeting in person, including virtual meetings, teleconference, and remote work.

All public and private K-12 schools must close, except for facilitating distance learning and virtual learning. Public libraries are closed for all in-person services but may continue to provide online services and programming. Schools and public libraries may be used for Essential Government Functions and food distribution. Places of public amusement and activity, salons, and spas must also close.

Businesses that are not considered Essential Businesses and Operations must cease all activities, with the exception of Minimum Basic Operations and remote work. Minimum Basic Operations are the minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the business's inventory, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for related functions and the minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely. All businesses, even those that are considered non-essential, are permitted to continue allowing individuals to work from home.

Additionally, all individuals in Wisconsin are ordered to stay at home or at their place of residence, with certain exceptions. People may leave their homes for Essential Activities, Essential Government Functions, Essential Business and Operations, Minimum Basic Operations, Essential Travel, and Special Situations. Essential Activities include health and safety (e.g., obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a healthcare professional); obtaining necessary supplies and services (e.g., obtaining or delivering services and supplies such as food and household consumer products); outdoor activity that complies with social distancing (e.g., walking, biking, hiking, running); working at Essential Business Operations and performing Minimum Basic Operations; and caring for others. Essential Travel includes all travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Special Situations, Essential Governmental Functions, Essential Business and Operations, or Minimum Basic Operations; travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons; travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, or any other related services; travel to return to a place of residence from outside of Wisconsin; travel required by law enforcement or court order, including transportation of children pursuant to a custody agreement; and travel required for nonresidents to return to their place of residence outside of Wisconsin. All other public and private gatherings of any number of people occurring outside a single household or living unit are prohibited.

The statewide Order is enforceable by local law enforcement, including county sheriffs, and violation and obstruction of the Order is punishable by up to 30 days of imprisonment, or a fine of up to \$250, or both.

The City of Milwaukee has issued a city-wide “Stay-at-Home” order, which will become effective at 12:01 a.m. on March 25, 2020, and which is substantially similar to the statewide Safer at Home Order. The Milwaukee Order can be found [here](#).

O’Neil, Cannon, Hollman, DeJong and Laing is considered an Essential Business under both the Wisconsin and City of Milwaukee orders and remains open during this time. We encourage you to reach out with any questions, concerns, or legal issues you may have, including those related to coronavirus.