

April 3, 2020

Ontario Extends Business Closures to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

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Additional Measures Necessary to Protect the Health and Safety of the People of Ontario

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Office of the Premier

TORONTO — Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is reducing the list of businesses classified as essential and ordering more workplaces to close. This measure is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the people of Ontario, while ensuring that necessary goods and services remain available.

The government is ordering all businesses not covered by the updated Emergency Order to close effective as of Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. This closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension as the situation evolves. Teleworking, online commerce and other innovative ways of working remotely are permitted at all times and are strongly encouraged for all businesses. All supply chains necessary for the production of vital food and healthcare supplies are being protected and remain intact.

The updated essential businesses list can be found [here](#).

"We are facing a critical moment in the fight against COVID-19 and we must do everything in our power to keep everyone safe and healthy and prevent our health care system from being overwhelmed," said Premier Ford. "Everyone must do their part to stop the spread and flatten the curve. If you are not an essential business, you need to close your doors, work from home if possible and play a role to help contain this outbreak. This is a matter of life and death."

As a temporary measure the Ontario government has revised the list of essential businesses. The updated list will direct additional businesses to close and restricts specified businesses to providing services by alternate methods such as curbside pick up and delivery, except in exceptional circumstances. This includes stores that sell hardware products, vehicle parts and supplies, pet and animal supplies, office supplies and computer products and repairs and safety supplies.

"We have now reached a critical time in our fight against COVID-19." said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health "Every step taken by the province and every effort made by each of us to avoid close contact with others are the key to our success as a province to stop the spread of this virus."

Only critical construction projects will continue, including industrial projects such as refineries and petrochemical plants and infrastructure projects such as new hospitals, roads

and bridges. New starts in residential projects will stop, while residential construction that is near completion will continue. Business-owners with questions concerning their essential business status are encouraged to call the Stop the Spread hotline at 1-888-444-3659. The hotline is available from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:30 a.m. — 5:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

"We recognize the toll this outbreak is taking on business owners and workers," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "Ontario businesses are top of mind during this unprecedented time. We know that the only way to ensure the health of our businesses and our economy is to ensure the health of all Ontarians."

The government is implementing additional measures to protect frontline workers in essential businesses by adding more than 60 special consultants and officers and doubling the number of phone agents at its Health and Safety Call Centre to 50 to make it easier for workers to report safety concerns. Workers worried their workplaces are unsafe can phone 1-877-202-0008 to speak with an agent.

"If you're a worker on the frontlines of this outbreak, you should know we're doing everything in our power to keep you safe at work," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "We're beefing up our inspectors and making it easier for you to report your concerns. We're working around the clock."

Quick Facts

- Everyone in Ontario should stay home unless absolutely necessary and practice physical distancing to reduce their exposure to other people. Avoid close contact (within 2 metres) with people outside of your immediate families.
- If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care.
- Take these everyday steps to reduce exposure to the virus and protect your health: wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer; sneeze and cough into your sleeve; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth; avoid contact with people who are sick; and stay home if you are sick.

Additional Resources

- Learn more about these [temporary measures](#) and see a [list of the essential services](#).
- [See how your organization can help fight COVID-19.](#)
- Learn more about [Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19.](#)
- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.