



COVID-19

e-Alert

3.23.20

Massachusetts Governor Issues Multiple Executive Orders to Reduce COVID-19 Risk

Background

On March 15, 2020, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued multiple executive orders to reduce the impact of the coronavirus throughout the Commonwealth.

Summary

Small Business Aid

- Governor Baker announced economic support for small businesses with a \$10 million loan fund to provide financial relief to businesses affected by COVID-19.
- Businesses with under 50 full- and part-time employees, including nonprofits, may be

This content is provided with the understanding that HR Knowledge is not rendering legal advice. While every effort is made to provide current information, the law changes regularly and laws may vary depending on the state or municipality. The material is made available for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for legal advice or your professional judgment. You should review applicable laws in your jurisdiction and consult experienced counsel for legal advice. If you have any questions regarding this content, please contact [HR Knowledge](#).

eligible for the [\\$10 million Small Business Recovery Loan Fund](#).

- Small businesses, private nonprofit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives, and small aquaculture enterprises may qualify for [Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#) of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses.

Social Gatherings

- The governor prohibited the gathering of 25 people or more on premises, including restaurants, bars, sporting events, concerts, conventions, faith-based events, or any other activity that brings together 25 or more people in a single space at the same time.
- The executive order regarding social gatherings does not apply to operations at airports, bus and train stations, medical facilities, libraries, shopping malls and centers, polling locations, grocery or retail stores, or pharmacies. It also does not apply to typical office environments, government buildings, or factories.

Schools in the Commonwealth

- Elementary and secondary schools have been suspended from March 17 to April 6. More information on this order can be found [here](#).
- Childcare programs have been asked to observe guidelines issued by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the Department of Public Health (DPH), which call for temporary closures based on direct or indirect exposure to individuals with COVID-19.
- Higher education — including both private and public colleges and universities — have been asked to shift to remote learning.

Health Care and Telehealth

The executive orders also require the following:

- All commercial insurers and the Group Insurance Commission must cover medically necessary telehealth services as in-person services.
 - Telehealth is the provision of health care remotely by means of telecommunication technologies. More information on this order can be found [here](#).
- Health insurers may not require cost-sharing or prior authorization for COVID-19 related testing.
- All assisted living residences must protect the health of residents and staff by banning visitors.
- All hospitals operated or licensed by the Department of Public Health or the Department of Mental Health must screen all visitors and restrict visitation if individuals show any indication of illness.
- All hospitals must cancel nonessential elective procedures beginning March 18, 2020.

- All licensed pharmacies are authorized to create and sell hand sanitizer over the counter.

Unemployment Assistance

- All requirements regarding attending seminars at the MassHire career centers have been suspended.
- Missing deadlines because of the effects of COVID-19 will be excused.
- All appeal hearings will be held by telephone only.
- The Department of Unemployment Assistance may now pay unemployment benefits if a worker is quarantined due to an order by a civil authority or medical professional or leaves employment due to reasonable risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member and does not intend to, or is not allowed to, return to work.
- To help individuals who cannot work due to the impact of COVID-19, the administration is filing emergency legislation that will allow new claims to be paid more quickly by waiving the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits.

More information on the multiple executive orders can be found [here](#).

Employer Next Steps

- We encourage Massachusetts employers to stay informed by visiting the mass.gov website [here](#).
- If you are a Full-Service or Virtual HR client and have any questions, please [email us](#).

The People Simplifying HR

For almost twenty years, HR Knowledge has made it our mission to demystify the complex and daunting process of HR management. We do more than just provide the level of service and technology you'd expect from an industry leader. We combine unparalleled passion for service with our decades of HR, payroll, and benefits experience to provide our clients with personalized and actionable advice that is second—to—none. From managed payroll to employee benefits to HR support, we can help your organization thrive, grow, and reduce operating costs—no matter what industry you serve. Whether you're interested in our Full-Service solution or just need your employee handbook written, HR Knowledge can help you minimize risk while staying on top of compliance regulations. The bottom line? We're not just another cloud-based technology company that also does HR, #WeAreHR. [Get the scoop](#) on how we can help you simplify HR.



@WEAREHRK