

**Governor's Office Daily COVID-19 Q & A**

**March 21, 2020**

**Equipment/Testing Kits**

**Q:** Is there a streamlined process list for healthcare facilities, nursing homes, transit operators, or others to contact for their PPE needs?

**A:** Local Health Departments and Hospitals should direct requests for PPE in IMATS, then refer to the Illinois Pharmaceutical Stockpile (IPS) and Strategic National Stockpile (SNS). Law enforcement should refer to their local IEMA agency and then State Operations Emergency Center. For additional information, please refer to the Recommended Guidance for Requesting PPE by DPH.

**Q:** There are plenty of private medical providers that have office space and surgery rooms. Do we have a memorandum of understanding with hospitals and clinics to serve as a backup in case the need for emergency rooms expand?

**A:** Hospitals are attempting to repurpose their own spaces to expand their ICUs capacity, so they can continue to access the resources within their hospital. For instance, some hospitals are repurposing their operating rooms to serve ICU patients.

**Q:** For those who are severely infected with coronavirus. What medical facilities/equipment are needed, and how many of those do we have (e.g., ventilators). What is anticipated as the bottleneck?

**A:** What is most needed in hospitals are PPEs, specifically N95 masks. Due to the shortage of N95 masks, some doctors have begun to use surgical masks, which is not ideal. The N95 masks are tight-fitting and filter out 95% of airborne particles, while the surgical mask doesn't provide nearly the same level of protection. Hospitals will also begin to run out of ventilators as more patients with severe symptoms enter the ICU. Ventilators cannot be produced as quickly as they must undergo rigorous testing, and there are supply issues as well.

## **Higher Education**

**Q:** How are State university employees to interpret whether they are essential or not? Any direction?

**A:** State University are still internally discussing that process and are encouraged to use discretion as each institution is unique. Businesses and employees with questions can call the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-252-2923 or email [CEO.support@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.support@illinois.gov).

## **ISBE**

**Q:** Is there clarification that we are on "Act of God" days until April 7?

**A:** All days that a school district is closed pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 2020-05 will be counted Act of God days. Emergency Days will not be used, and the Act of God days are not made up at the end of the school year. School Districts should consult with their local unions about expectations for teachers and personnel.

**Q:** Should we put our E-Learning or Distance Learning Plan into place? With Act of God Days, we can only take grades that would raise a student's grade?

**A:** E-learning during mandated closures will not count as Instructional Day one the school calendar. Attendance is not necessary, as days during the mandated statewide school closure on March 17-30 are not instructional days. ISBE encourages school districts to utilize additional learning opportunities to students. ISBE has a compiled a library for resources. Please refer [www.isbe.net/keeplearning](http://www.isbe.net/keeplearning).

**Q:** What information can be offered about high school credits for high school students and graduating seniors?

**A:** Please refer to the [ISBE guidance document](#). For the 2019-20 AP exam administration only, students can take a 45-minute online exam at home. To be fair to all students, the exam will only include topics and skills most AP teachers and students have already covered in class by early March. Starting Wednesday, March 25, students and teachers can attend free, and optional live AP review courses delivered by AP teachers across the county. These courses will be recorded and available on-demand.

## **Townships/Community**

**Q:** Has the Governor's Office been proactively coordinating with townships to assist with relief and information sharing?

**A:** The Governor's Office is actively engaging with the Illinois Municipal League to ensure local units of government remain informed.

**Q:** Is there anything that we (legislators) can be doing to get more information out to our constituents? Having proper information out there is the most important thing to get everyone on the same page.

**A:** Visit [coronavirus.illinois.gov](https://coronavirus.illinois.gov) for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19. It includes resources for providers, travel guidance, how to limit community spread, etc. Please promote this website with your constituents.

**Q:** What is the general advice to people about going outdoors?

**A:** The advice is to go outdoors for fresh air and exercise. Ride a bike, walk the dog, go for a hike, jog. Social distancing does not mean staying indoors. It means avoiding close contact with people. Please refer to [DPH FAQs](#) for additional COVID-19 information.

## **Healthcare Workers**

**Q:** If a first responder is found to have been in direct contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, can we mandate that they be immediately eligible for testing for the virus without the requirement of being symptomatic?

**A:** To ensure we are using the testing kits wisely as there is still a shortage, first responders should follow [DPH updated guidelines](#).

**Q:** Are mental health practitioners, who bill medical insurance, also considered critical frontline responders who can work from their office facilities? Especially if their office infrastructure enables them to provide remote mental health teleservices to clients?

**A:** Mental health practitioners can work from home, if their office infrastructure provides that flexibility.

## **Childcare**

**Q:** Can grocery clerks be declared essential workers (emergency personnel), and receive free childcare?

**A:** Essential workers with children already participating in the Child Care Assistance Programs (CCAP) have had their co-pays reduced to \$1 for the month of April and May. Additional information from the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is forthcoming.

## **Housing**

**Q:** Can the Governor release an executive order to stop evictions?

**A:** Please refer to Executive Order Section 2. Pursuant to the Illinois Management Agency, ILCS 3305/7(2), (8) and (10), all state, county and local law enforcement officers in the State of Illinois are instructed to cease enforcement orders of eviction from residential premises for the duration of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation. No provision contained in the Executive Order shall be construed as relieving any individual from the obligation to pay rent to make mortgage payments or to comply with any other obligation that an individual may have under tenancy or mortgage.

**Q:** Will banks provide homeowners a grace period on their mortgage payments?

**A:** Banks may decide to assist customers that have been impacted by COVID-19. Check with your personal bank for additional details on any programs or assistance that may be available.

**Q:** Will landlords require rent from tenants impacted by the COVID19 disaster?

**A:** It is up to individual landlords whether they want to provide some relief to their tenants.

**Q:** Are there other plans for assisting with homelessness / those seeking shelter in places where shelters are no longer taking new clients?

**A:** IDHS is making \$6 million available throughout the state for isolation housing for people experiencing homelessness through local Continuums of Care. IDHS is also increasing existing homeless service providers' funding by 5% to increase capacity during this crisis. For more information, [click here](#).

## **Tax:**

**Q:** Since the federal government extended the due date for federal income tax to July 15, 2020. Will Illinois also extend the state's income tax deadline?

**A:** Illinois allows for an automatic extension to file until Oct 15. Taxpayers do not have to apply for the extension, and it's automatic. However, this does not extend to payments. For those who owe, payment would typically be due on 4/15.

**Q:** The \$75k or less restriction on the sales tax reprieve action is too low. Can we request for reconsideration of that limitation amount?

**A:** 80% of the retailers registered as an Eating and Drinking Establishment would see relief at this threshold. This is based on actual CY 2019 tax filings of those businesses. This is a necessary limitation until the state receives Federal aid to help expand these services to all impacted companies.

## **Illinois Commerce/ Utility Services**

**Q:** Where can the public learn about utility services being disconnected or late payment fees?

**A:** The Illinois Commerce Commission has released the following information for utility providers and users. For more information, [click here](#).

## **Safety Measures**

**Q:** What is the status of health care workers? Do we need assistance from other states? How/when will you assess?

**A:** If cases continue to grow quickly, and hospitals do not have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), the healthcare workforce will be negatively impacted. Currently, some hospitals are attempting to train non-ICU doctors so they can work in the ICU if it is needed. They are looking for ways to optimize their workforce and redesign their staffing models.

**Q:** What agency would social service agencies report to if a resident or staff is exposed or tests positive? Can they have a contact person?

**A:** The social service agency should contact their local health department. If a staff member tests positive, they should seek medical help and not return for at least 2 weeks or following doctor's orders. If a resident tests positive, the resident should remain quarantined, and the agency should seek medical help. Please refer to the Department of Human Services list of guidelines by [various providers](#).

**Q:** What guidelines can be given to constituents worried about traveling across state lines?

**A:** The Executive Order 10 allows residents to travel for essential purposes that include health and safety needs and essential business operations. Individuals are strongly encouraged to verify that their transportation out of State remains available and functional prior to beginning such travel.

**Business Compliance:**

**Q:** What should a resident do if there is a non-essential business that is not abiding by the stay at home order?

**A:** Refer to local law enforcement authorities. Local law enforcement is working closely with the Illinois State Police and other state agencies to implement the Executive Order 10.

**Q:** What are the consequences if an establishment does not comply? Will there be any oversight for this?

**A:** Illinois State Police is cooperating with local law enforcement and business licensing authorities to enforce the Governor's Executive Order 10.

**Q:** Is there a plan in place for protecting cosmetologists that are still working with the public?

**A:** Gyms, spas, salons, barbershops, tattoo parlors, and other similar facilities are not considered Healthcare and Public Health Operations and are therefore not exempted from the stay-at-home order. Non-essential business operations must cease.

**Q:** Can companies that manufacture products that can be used to clean and disinfect areas contaminated by COVID-19 will be allowed to stay open with minimum staffing under the shelter in place order?

**A:** Specifically included in the Healthcare and Public Health Operations exemption to Executive Order 10, the Stay-at-Home Order, are manufacturers, technicians, logistics, and warehouse operators and distributors of medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), medical gases, pharmaceuticals, blood and blood products, vaccines, testing materials, laboratory supplies, cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting or sterilization supplies, and tissue and paper towel products.

**Q:** Is critical infrastructure an "essential service"?

**A:** In Executive Order 10, Essential infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, food production, distribution, and sale; construction (including, but not limited to, construction required in response to this public health emergency, hospital construction, construction of long-term care facilities, public works construction, and housing construction); building management and maintenance; airport operations; operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical (including power generation, distribution, and production of raw materials); distribution centers; oil and biofuel refining; roads, highways, railroads, and public transportation; ports; cybersecurity operations; flood control; solid waste and recycling collection and removal; and internet, video, and telecommunications systems (including the provision of essential global, national, and local infrastructure for computing services, business infrastructure, communications, and web-based services.)

**Q:** If a store employee contracts COVID-19, does the store have to shut down for two weeks?

**A:** No, the employees should remain in quarantine in their homes per medical orders. Please visit [DPH updated guidelines](#).

**Q:** In the event of a statewide lockdown, is there a way for companies to apply for an exemption as a potential essential business?

**A:** There is no application process in place for businesses to apply. The guidelines in place are based on recommendations made by public health officials and their assessment of the situation. Companies can call DCEO's helpline 1-800-252-2923 or [CEO.support@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.support@illinois.gov) to determine whether their business deemed essential.

**Q:** Will the order apply to defense contractors such as Woodward?

**A:** Companies can call DCEO's helpline 1-800-252-2923 or [CEO.support@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.support@illinois.gov) to determine whether their business deemed essential or if they must comply with EO-10.

**Q:** Can Funerals and Cemetery services continue to operate?

**A:** The Executive Order 10 specifically exempts Funeral services; however, funerals and other religious gatherings should still practice the social distancing guidelines. Guidance for faith-based facilities and funeral services can be found on the IDPH web site.

**Q:** Do local domestic violence shelters have to shut down or take other precautions? What guidance can they follow?

**A:** Shelters are considered essential under the Executive Order 10, so they will not be forced to close. However, they should practice social distancing and having no more than 10 people together in one space. For more information, please visit [DPH updated guidelines](#).

Further, we urge victims of domestic violence to find a safe place to stay during this order. Please reach out so we can help. You may call the domestic violence hotline at 1-877-863-6338 or contact your local law enforcement.

**Q:** Will HVAC Contractors and bike stores and bakeries be Treated as Essential Services?

**A:** HVAC work, Bike stores, and bakeries are considered essential services under the Executive Order 10.

**Q:** Will constituents traveling between Missouri and Illinois be able to do so for the exchange of children as per family court orders for shared parenting time

**A:** The Executive Order 10 permits travel across state lines for essential purposes, including taking care of children and other relatives.

### **Liquor**

**Q:** Can a restaurant/bar/brewpub/distiller pub, etc. continue to sell for off-premises consumption, for curbside pickup, for drive-through service, for home delivery, or through other similar mechanisms of sale and delivery?

**A:** Yes. Subject to local liquor commission authority, all license holders having the authority to sell alcoholic liquor at retail may continue to sell and deliver alcoholic liquor for off-premises consumption.

**Q:** Can the current 30 date mandate for license holders to pay their alcohol bill be expanded to 60 days or 30 days after reopening?

**A:** Retailers who are concerned about the Delinquency List must follow the Bonafide Dispute process that has been posted on the ILCC website. Once they file a dispute they will be removed from the Delinquency list until further notice.

### **Other**

**Q:** What statistical projections are being used, and what are the numbers anticipated, and what are the sources of those projections and numbers that have led to the decision to implement this shelter order?



**A:** The Governor's Office had numerous conversations with Epidemiologists, Infectious Disease Doctors, Public Health Officials, and reviewed models regarding COVID-19. We are currently on a very dangerous trajectory that models' countries that have most severely impacted by this pandemic. In the absence of a vaccine, the only way we can curb infections and fatalities is by having people stay home.

**Q:** Pharmacists are the only ones who can fill prescriptions, not doctors or nurses, yet they are being exposed to these patients every day. Making it mandatory to fill prescriptions through a drive-through method could potentially reduce the risk of infecting the very people who are first responders, too, in this situation.

**A:** An individual's preferred pharmacy may not have a drive-thru window, as some are located within grocery stores. It's up to the pharmacy to create safety procedures regarding filling medications.