CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) RESOURCES AND GUIDELINES

The Louisiana Retailers Association is working with our government partners and members to provide an updated list of resources and guidelines in response to this crisis. Please visit the LDH website for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19. We will continue to populate this document as we receive new information.

Louisiana Department of Health- http://ldh.la.gov/coronavirus/
Louisiana Workforce Commission- http://www.laworks.net/
Louisiana Department of Revenue- https://revenue.louisiana.gov/
Governor John Bel Edwards- https://gov.louisiana.gov/

Statewide Proclamation- Updated 4/3/2020- “Stay at Home Order”

Gov. Edwards has extended a Stay at Home order directing all Louisiana residents to stay at home as much as possible until April 30 to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Louisiana. The order specifically requires the following businesses to close:

- All places of public amusement, whether indoors or outdoors, including but not limited to, locations with amusement rides, carnivals, amusement parks, water parks, trampoline parks, aquariums, zoos, museums, arcades, fairs, pool halls, children’s play centers, playgrounds, theme parks, any theaters, concert and music halls, adult entertainment venues, racetracks, and other similar businesses.

- All personal care and grooming businesses, including but not limited to, barber shops, beauty salons, nail salons, spas, massage parlors, tattoo parlors, and other similar businesses.

- All malls, except for stores in a mall that have a direct outdoor entrance and exit that provide essential services and products as provided by the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency guidelines.

- The restrictions from March 16 are still in effect- Casinos, video poker establishments, bowling alleys, fitness centers, movie theaters and bars are closed. Restaurants, cafes and coffee shops should be closed to patrons eating on site. Take-out, drive-through and delivery orders are allowed.
Businesses consistent with guidance from the Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) may remain open and individuals may leave their residence to perform any work necessary to provision, operate, and maintain these businesses. Visit https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19 to see guidance on “essential businesses.”

**Retail Not Listed as Essential and not Required to Close by the Order**

All other retail not considered “essential” and not specifically directed to close under the Governor’s order may remain open. However, you must adhere to the requirements below.

- Any business not covered by the guidance from the CISA discussed in Section 3 of the order and not ordered to temporarily close must reduce operations to continue with minimum contact with members of the public and essential employees, while requiring proper social distancing. Further, the 10-person limitation on gathering size shall apply to such business operations.

Some local governments are implementing more restrictive measures. We will update members as we receive this information. See “Local Government Information” below.

**Trucking Waivers**

With respect to commercial motor carriers traveling on public highways of the State of Louisiana for the purpose of emergency preparedness and disaster relief efforts, the provisions of Louisiana Revised Statute 32:386 (A) is hereby suspended and the following size and weight restrictions for such vehicles shall be as follows: The total gross weight of any vehicle or combination of vehicles shall not exceed eighty-eight thousand pounds. Nothing in this Order shall be construed to allow any vehicle transporting commodities or fuel for disaster preparedness and relief to exceed weight limits posted for bridges and like structures, or relieve any vehicle or carrier, owner or driver of any vehicle from compliance with any restrictions other than those specified, or from any statute, rule, order, or other legal requirement not Specifically waived herein. Nothing in this Order shall be construed or interpreted as being applicable to travel on non-state maintained highways, or as being applicable to the transport of commodities that are not in support of rescue, recovery and repair efforts associated with the emergency which prompted the emergency declaration in Proclamation No. 25 JBE 2020. Effective as of March 18, 2020 and shall remain in effect until April 18, 2020, unless amended, modified or rescinded.


FMCSA has granted a waiver to CDL and CLP holders who have experienced issues with obtaining access to DMV offices and to medical examiners, many of whom are refusing to take appointments for DOT physicals due to contamination concerns. The waiver extends the date of expiration - until June 30 - of applicable CDLs, CLPs, and non-CDL licenses of commercial

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drivers, as well as medical certificates that would otherwise expire between March 1 and June 30. The waiver can be found at this link: https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/emergency/fmcsa-cdl-waiver-32420.

State Government Information

Louisiana Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program: Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the Louisiana Loan Portfolio Guaranty Program, which will offer loans of up to $100,000 to Louisiana small businesses of fewer than 100 employees that are impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. To help Main Street and rural businesses sustain operations, the loans will require no payments for 180 days and carry below-market interest rates of no more than 3.5 percent. A total loan pool of $50 million will be quickly disbursed to eligible small businesses across Louisiana. “The beauty of this program is we are not competing with the essential financial products offered by the U.S. Small Business Administration — we are complementing SBA,” LED Secretary Don Pierson said. “Our bankers know their customers well. They have confidence in the LPFA to administer this program in a professional, proactive manner; and they have the further confidence of an LED loan guaranty fund that will enhance the security of these loans.” https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/covid19/led-loan-guaranty-program/led-loan-guaranty-program

To read all details, please click HERE.
General Questions, please email: LEDSmallbizloans@la.gov

State Sales Tax Extension: The filing and payment deadline for the February 2020 state sales tax period is extended to May 20, 2020. This is an automatic extension and no extension request is necessary. The Department will waive delinquency penalties and compromise interest associated with delinquent sales tax remittances as long as the return and payment are received by the extended due date of May 20, 2020. Taxpayers cannot utilize the Parish E-File or Sales Tax Online filing systems to take advantage of this filing and payment extension relief. Sales tax returns and payments must be submitted via LaTAP or by paper filing. All electronic filing and payment mandates contained within Title 61 of the Louisiana Administrative Code relative to sales tax are temporarily suspended. No penalties will be assessed for a taxpayer’s failure to file a sales tax return electronically or remit sales tax by electronic funds transfer. https://revenue.louisiana.gov/

State Income Tax Extension: Due to the public health emergency created by the coronavirus pandemic, the Louisiana Department of Revenue (LDR) is extending the deadline for state income taxes to July 15, 2020. The extension applies to Louisiana individual, corporation, fiduciary and partnership income tax returns and payments. https://revenue.louisiana.gov/

Unemployment Tax Payment Deferral: Louisiana employers will get a temporary deferral from paying their first quarter 2020 unemployment taxes. Employers will still be required to file their first quarter 2020 wage and tax reports with the agency by April 30, 2020, but payment of the associated taxes will be deferred until June 30, 2020. Louisiana employers can begin filing their quarterly wage and tax reports on April 1 through the LWC’s web-based system,
LAWATS, accessible at the agency’s website, www.laworks.net. The deadline for filing the reports is April 30. No penalty or interest will be assessed for payments received by June 30.

LWC Work Permits for Minors: In response to the current COVID-19 event, pursuant to La. R.S. 23:184.1 the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) will begin issuing sixty (60) day blanket Employment Certificates for employers desiring to employ minors in the State of Louisiana. Employment Certificates issued due to this event shall expire sixty (60) days from the date of issuance. Upon expiration, employers will be required to obtain Employment Certificates as required pursuant to La. R.S. 23:181 et. seq. Employers desiring to obtain an Employment Certificate pursuant to this memorandum must submit a completed and signed “Application to Employ Minors under 18” along with proof of age to laborprograms@lwc.la.gov. Application- http://www.laworks.net/Downloads/WFD/MinorApplicationToEmployForm.pdf. Employers should allow three (3) days for processing. When the application has been approved, the employer will be notified via email from the LWC Office of Workforce Development. The names of those minors who are approved to work pursuant to the Employment Certificate will also be attached to the email. As indicated, blanket Employment Certificates are effective for a maximum of sixty (60) days. Blanket Employment Certificates are not transferable. Certificates are required to be kept at the minor’s work location. Any questions should be directed to laborprograms@lwc.la.gov.

Louisiana Economic Development Help Desk for Businesses: For COVID-19 business questions, LED may be reached at LEDbiz@la.gov or via the toll-free hotline, (833) 457-0531. The COVID-19 hotline is staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. Be aware that high call volumes might result in delays. Callers are encouraged to keep trying, leave a voice mail or contact LED via email. For Louisiana businesses seeking federal financial assistance, they are encouraged first to contact the U.S. Small Business Administration at SBA.gov/Disaster to apply for COVID-19 disaster aid. The SBA Customer Service Center may be reached at (800) 659-2955, with an additional TTY line for the hearing-impaired at (800) 877-8339.

Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (“ATC”): Temporarily, Retailers will be allowed to use an alternative means of payment, other than cash or check, for purchases of alcoholic beverages from licensed wholesalers. On a temporary basis, ATC will permit retailers to pay alcoholic beverage wholesalers through a credit card issued by a third party with the caveat that acceptance of such credit card payments by wholesalers in this instance is at their discretion.

All permits due to expire in March shall be granted an extension to April 30, 2020 but permit holders shall be responsible to submit their renewal applications. Effective March 16, 2020, ATC is requesting that all current permit holders complete all renewal applications and return via mail or complete online (if applicable). NEW applications may be submitted by mail or by email to atcbusiness@atc.la.gov. https://atc.louisiana.gov/

WIC: In response to supply disruptions caused by COVID-19, the Louisiana WIC Program (LA WIC), effective March 26, 2020, is allowing the following substitutions of WIC Approved Foods.
**Low Fat and Skim Milk Substitutes**
- Gallon sizes of 2% may be substituted as necessary for each gallon of Low-Fat or Skim Milk prescribed on the participant’s e-WIC card
- Quart sizes of 2% may be substituted as necessary for each quart of Low-Fat or Skim Milk prescribed on the participant’s e-WIC card

**Large, White Egg Substitutes**
The following may be substituted as necessary for each one (1) dozen large, white eggs prescribed on the participant’s e-WIC card
- White Medium, Extra-Large, or Jumbo eggs

**16oz Whole Grain Additions**
Addition of 16 oz. whole grain rolls and buns

**Pharmacy Updates from Louisiana Medicaid:** As a precaution with the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) intends to take measures to minimize public exposure. A few pharmacy edits will be revised to encourage recipients to get all necessary maintenance medications during one pharmacy visit. On March 17, 2020, members were able to start receiving early refills and up to a 90-day supply, as appropriate, of maintenance medications that are not controlled substances. These include cardiovascular drugs (hypertension, coronary artery disease, thrombosis), diabetes drugs, respiratory drugs (inhaled and oral), contraceptives, antiretrovirals, direct-acting antivirals for hepatitis C, immunosuppressives, antipsychotics, and antidepressants, among others. On March 24, 2020, existing approved prior authorizations on prescribed drugs and physician-administered drugs (drugs included as a medical benefit) will be extended through June 30, 2020, with no action needed by the prescriber. This will not affect the number of refills originally authorized by the prescriber. Member copays for prescribed drugs are waived, effective March 24, 2020. To reduce exposure, providers should consider encouraging members to use pharmacies that offer free home delivery services or drive-through pickup services. To reduce contact, member signatures are no longer required.

**Board of Pharmacy: Updated 3-25-20**
Although the Board rescinded the previous Emergency Rule on this topic on March 23 based on new information at the time that the supply chain was adequate, there is new information emerging now which suggests that New Orleans and the rest of Louisiana are evolving as a new epicenter for the Coronavirus disease 2019. New data reveals the per capita caseload in Louisiana lags only New York and Washington. As additional supplies of the drugs are re-routed to Louisiana, it would be prudent for Louisiana pharmacists to exercise their professional discretion in the dispensing of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for at least the next 30-60 days. During their meeting today, the members voted to issue this guidance document in lieu of another emergency rule.

- With respect to the dispensing of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for the COVID-19 outbreak, the Board strongly encourages dispensing pharmacists in community pharmacies to ensure the prescription bears a COVID-19 diagnosis, and to dispense a maximum of a 14-day supply, with no refills unless a new prescription is presented.
- With respect to the dispensing of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine for all other diagnoses, the Board strongly encourages dispensing pharmacists in community pharmacies to dispense a maximum of a 30-day supply per dispensing.
• The Board specifically encourages pharmacists to exercise their professional discretion when presented prescriptions written for large quantities, or for what appears to be outside the context of a legitimate physician-patient relationship, or for what may not be a legitimate medical purpose.

*Updated from Board of Pharmacy, 3-28-20:* Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians licensed in another state but not by the Louisiana Board seeking permission to practice pharmacy in Louisiana during the COVID-19 public health emergency should obtain an NABP Passport. The NABP Passport is a licensure verification process administered by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy to assist in the pandemic response. Individuals can obtain an NABP Passport by logging into their NABP e-Profile at https://dashboard.nabp.pharmacy/Login/Splash, click ‘customer’, then ‘my e-Profile’, and then click on the tile labeled “NABP Passport / COVID-19 Emergency”. Please follow the “add a state” instructions on this page. Once complete, click “submit.” Please note: your license information must be up to date including expiration date and license status. NABP will verify this information through this process. Once the NABP Passport for Louisiana is approved, the individual will be cleared to practice under the state’s emergency declaration. Licensees will also be notified on their eProfile and via email. There is no cost to the applicant. Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians holding an NABP Passport for Louisiana are not required to obtain any other credential from our office. The Louisiana Board of Pharmacy recognizes an NABP Passport for Louisiana as valid for practice. Visit the Board of Pharmacy’s Board’s COVID-19 webpage for up to date guidance.

**Mental Health Resources:** “Keep Calm through COVID” Line: 1-866-310-7977. Available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. All calls are confidential. With the recent outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) you may be feeling overwhelmed with fear and anxiety about the uncertainty surrounding this new public health emergency. The Office of Behavioral Health “Keep Calm through COVID” Phone Line provides trained, compassionate counselors to support you during this difficult time. Counselors provide information and service coordination with linkage to mental health and substance use counseling services. Find additional resources to help children and adults cope with stress and anxiety at http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3883

**Local Government Information**

**Lafourche Parish:** On April 3, Lafourche Parish announced more restrictive measures for retailers that are still operating. Please see announcement here- http://www.lafourchegov.org/Home/Components/News/News/5845/17?backlist=%2f

- Number of people in store is limited to 50% of fire marshal capacity
- Close lawn and garden areas (if applicable)
- Store hours limited to 6:00am-7:00pm

**New Orleans Stay at Home Order:** Mayor Cantrell’s proclamation is in effect until 6:00 am on April 16 and requires public and private gatherings to be canceled or prohibited in non-emergency situations. Personal gatherings should be limited to the number of persons in a
reasonable household size. Bars, gyms and fitness centers, shopping centers configured as malls, but not strip centers, live performance venues, reception facilities and other establishments where large gatherings routinely occur and/or where the risk of possible COVID-19 spread exists, shall cease operations. Restaurants shall limit their operations to take out and delivery only. Essential businesses may continue to operate: Healthcare; Food service or cultivation; Social services; Construction and critical infrastructure; News and media; Gas stations and automobile repair; Bicycle supply and repair; Banks and financial institutions; Hardware stores; Service providers essential to operation of businesses or residences; Mailing and shipping services; Educational institutions (via distance learning); Laundry services; Restaurants (delivery and takeout only); Work from home support suppliers; Essential business support services; Food delivery services; Hotels; Essential transportation service providers; Home-based care for seniors, adults or children; Residential facilities for seniors, adults, and children; Professional services, like legal or accounting services, to assist in compliance with legally mandated activities; and Childcare facilities (practicing social distancing).

New Orleans Sales Tax- Announced March 17. The City of New Orleans is waiving fines, fees, interest and penalties on sales tax payments due to the City for 60 days. In addition, the City will extend the renewal period for ABOs up to 30 days without penalty. The Mayor said that businesses that are continuing to operate should continue to remit taxes on time. https://ready.nola.gov/home/

New Orleans Permits- Beginning March 24, certain types of permits and licenses may once again be applied for on the New Orleans One Stop App public portal. http://onestopapp.nola.gov. These permits, as well as other permit and license types, may also still be applied for by email at the following addresses. Any additional questions should be sent to the listed email addresses or call One Stop at (504) 658-7125.

Building Permit Applications: permitinfo@nola.gov
Short Term Rental Applications: str@nola.gov
Alcohol Permit Applications: alcoholpermits@nola.gov
Ground Transportation Permit Applications: gtb@nola.gov
Business License Applications: businesslicenseinfo@nola.gov
Trade License Applications: tradelicenseinfo@nola.gov

East Baton Rouge Sales Tax- Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome signed an executive order Wednesday 3/18/20 to extend the time for filing East Baton Rouge local sales tax returns for 30 days. The returns for February and March of 2020 are extended; they will be considered timely if filed on or before April 20, 2020, and May 20, 2020, respectively.

Federal Government Information

Small Business Administration Disaster Aid Impacted small businesses may apply for up to $2 million in working capital to pay for fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can’t be paid because of the COVID-19 disaster. To get started immediately, visit https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/
CARES ACT Small Business Relief Summary - Paycheck Protection Program: The Paycheck Protection Program prioritizes millions of Americans employed by small businesses by authorizing up to $349 billion toward job retention and certain other expenses. Lenders may begin processing loan applications as soon as April 3, 2020! Paycheck Protection Loans are government-backed but will come from private banks. You should inquire at your local bank about these loans. The Treasury Department has released the loan application. You can see it here. For an overview of the program CLICK HERE If you’re a borrower, more information can be found HERE

DOL Issues Guidance on Paid Leave Mandate: The Department of Labor (DOL) issued its first level of guidance on how the Families First Coronavirus Response Act will affect covered businesses, or those with less than 500 employees. The DOL provided a Fact Sheet for Employees, a Fact Sheet for Employers, and a Questions and Answers document. The DOL made it clear it will be issuing more guidance in the future in relations to its authority to exempt certain businesses from the paid leave mandate. Link to Required Poster-Employee Rights: Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family and Medical Leave under The Families First Coronavirus Response Act

In addition, the Internal Revenue Service issued guidance to employers on how to be fully reimbursed for the cost of paid leave provided for employees. The DOL is expected to finalize its regulations by April 2.

Additional Resources

- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- Information for Communities, Schools, and Businesses
- Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations – Community Facilities
- SBA: COVID-19 Resources
- DOL: Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for Coronavirus
- DOL: OHSA Resources for Workers and Employers on COVID-19
- WHO: Get Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19
- CISA: Risk Management for COVID-19
- EPA: Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19