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/
Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness wwww.GOHSEP.la.gov
Louisiana Workforce Commission- http://www.laworks.net/
Louisiana Department of Revenue- https://revenue.louisiana.gov/
Governor John Bel Edwards- https://gov.louisiana.gov/

“Phase Two”

Governor John Bel Edwards signed Proclamation 74 JBE 2020 moving Louisiana into Phase Two beginning on June 5 and lasting at least 21 days. The primary change from Phase One is the increase in occupancy for non-essential retail, including shopping malls, from 25% to 50%. Bars are allowed to open at 25% occupancy in Phase Two. Spas, tattoo establishments, and esthetician service providers are also allowed to open in Phase Two. Businesses are still required to practice social distancing, provide increased sanitization and to require all employees interacting with the public to wear masks. The state guidelines recommend that businesses consider offering temperature checks before customers enter & posting the symptoms of COVID-19 with a request that people with symptoms not enter the establishment.

Click here for guidelines and sample signage. Parishes may enact more restrictive guidelines. Please see “Local Government Information” below.

OpenSafely.la.gov allows business owners and church leaders to register in order to receive up-to-the minute information on what phase their business and/or church is considered, what phase the state is in as Louisiana moves through phases of return and what social distancing and sanitation guidelines are required for their specific operation in each phase. Malls and gaming establishments MUST register at OpenSafely.la.gov.
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](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/](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/](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](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”):** Under Phase One beginning May 15, in-person responsible vendor classes may resume. Classes may be conducted under strict social distancing guidelines. Classroom sizes must be limited to no more than 25% occupancy capacity rate per location as set by SFM. Occupancy capacity includes trainers, students, and any person involved with the class. All Phase One employees who deal with the public must wear appropriate face coverings and enforce social distancing by maintaining physical distance of at least six (6) feet between persons.

**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. These substitutions will expire on May 31, 2020.

**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

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• 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

**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:** Effective 11:59 p.m. on April 15, 2020, and continuing through the declared public health emergency in Louisiana, licensed pharmacists shall be permitted to order FDA-authorized COVID-19 laboratory tests in Louisiana. Further, the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy has previously ruled that licensed pharmacists can perform moderately complex tests; the screening, administration, and reporting related to the COVID-19 testing would be covered under that previous ruling by the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy. http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/providers/Pharmacists-COVIDTesting.pdf

During their April 2 meeting, the Board took note of the reduced number of offerings of live continuing education (CE) programming during 2020 subsequent to the stay-at-home orders issued during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they determined it appropriate to modify the CE requirements for pharmacist license renewal for Calendar Year 2021 such that a total of 15 hours of ACPE-accredited pharmacist-specific CE will qualify for license renewal without regard to whether the CE is acquired through live presentations or home study methods.

*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.

All previously issued waivers and guidance from the Board relative to this public health emergency have been extended to June 5, 2020 unless terminated sooner. 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](http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3883)
Local Government Information

Mayor LaToya Cantrell announced that New Orleans will enter Phase Two on Saturday, June 13, at 6 a.m. As in Phase One, all residents must continue to practice physical distancing at least six feet apart; wear a face covering in public; adhere to strict hygiene and sanitation protocols; and remain home if elderly or have high risk medical conditions. Phase Two will ease restrictions on medium-risk operations, while continuing limits on occupancy, social distancing measures, and requirements for personal protective equipment. https://ready.nola.gov/home/

Phase Two guidelines:
Operations opening at 50% capacity with distancing:

- Restaurants & Bars with food
- Gyms/Fitness Centers
- Barbers & Hair Salons
- Salons, Spas, Tattoo Parlors
- Retail & Malls
- Aquariums, Zoos, and Museums
- Community Centers
- Conference/Meeting Rooms

Opening at 25% capacity with distancing:

- Bars without food permits
- Outdoor pools

Operations that will remain closed and prohibited:

- Indoor live entertainment
- Festivals and Fairs
- Amusement parks and Arcades
- Music and Concert Halls

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

New Orleans ABO Permits: The City of New Orleans’ renewal deadline for Alcohol Beverage Operator (ABO) permits is being extended again until June 30, 2020. (The previously extended deadline was May 31). ABO expirations will extend through July 31, 2020. (The previously extended expiration was June 30). The City is processing a healthy amount of permits as the Office of Safety and Permits is open for emailed submissions. Payments are also being accepted online. Residents may also drop off payments at City Hall. For any questions, email Laura Barth at ABO@nola.gov

New Orleans: Brake Tag Late Fees  
In order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on brake tag operations, all brake tag stations will cease issuing brake tags through May 15, 2020. As such, late fees for brake tags expiring in March, April and May 2020 will be waived until July 1, 2020. Additionally, all other late fees will be reduced by $6 during this period. Actual reopening dates may vary from station to station.

New Orleans: Failed Vehicle Reinspections  
Any vehicle that failed inspection and received a temporary brake tag between Feb. 20, 2020, and May 31, 2020, will be given until July 1, 2020, to reach compliance and receive a reinspection. This reinspection must take place at the station where the temporary brake tag was issued. Questions about brake tags and vehicle inspections may be submitted to BrakeTag@nola.gov.

New Orleans: Ground Transportation Bureau Permit and Licensing Late Fees  
In order to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on Ground Transportation Bureau operations, the GTB Inspection Station and office closed to the public on March 16. As such, all delinquent fees for vehicle inspections, Certificate of Public Necessity and Convenience renewals, driver permits, and tour guide permits that would be applicable from March 16, 2020, through May 31, 2020, will be waived.

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/

Paycheck Protection Program: On April 23, the House passed the Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act. The bill includes more than $320 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, or PPP, created by the CARES Act, which was passed late last month. The program, which quickly ran out of money because of heavy demand, provides forgivable loans to businesses that keep their employees on the payroll. Small businesses that missed out on the first round of federal relief in the Paycheck Protection Program will have a second chance to apply for the forgivable loans now that Congress has replenished the PPP fund. The $484 billion aid package, which sets aside $320 billion for small business PPP loans, was signed into law by President Donald Trump on April 24. Applicants who already are working with a local lender and have completed the application process will keep their place in line and don’t have to refile, according to lenders. However, if you do have a pending application or have not yet submitted an application, you should be contacting your local lender for more information. https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program

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 IRS has published an overview and FAQ’s related to FFCRA’s refundable tax credit provisions https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/covid-19-related-tax-credits-for-required-paid-leave-provided-by-small-and-midsize-businesses-faqs#substantiate_eligibility

Employee Retention Credit under the CARES Act: The Employee Retention Credit is a fully refundable tax credit for employers equal to 50 percent of qualified wages (including allocable qualified health plan expenses) that Eligible Employers pay their employees. This Employee Retention Credit applies to qualified wages paid after March 12, 2020, and before January 1, 2021. The maximum amount of qualified wages taken into account with respect to each employee for all calendar quarters is $10,000, so that the maximum credit for an Eligible Employer for qualified wages paid to any employee is $5,000. https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/faqs-employee-retention-credit-under-the-cares-act

Additional Resources

- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- OSHA Issues Guidance for Retail Pharmacies
OSHA has issued an alert listing safety tips employers can follow to help protect retail pharmacy workers from exposure to the coronavirus. Here is a link to the new OSHA
guidance, which is very similar to CDC’s pharmacy guidance from last month. Also, OSHA’s new guidance says to consult the agency’s healthcare worker and employer guidance for pharmacists providing clinical services to patients, such as immunizations, who might need additional protections.

- 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
- https://www.feedingus.org/