

MN Stay at Home Order

On March 25th, Gov. Walz announced a Stay at Home order, effective March 27 at 11:59 p.m. through April 10 at 5 p.m. The order directs Minnesotans to limit movements outside of their homes beyond essential needs.

Workers and businesses who provide critical services that cannot otherwise be done from home are exempt from the order. That includes auto and collision repair. This exemption is provided for on page 6 of the order, under Transportation and Logistics, as follows:

State, county, and local government agencies and agency workers, as well as private sector workers, who support or enable transportation functions, including engineers, dispatchers, maintenance and repair technicians (including workers at maintenance and repair shops), warehouse workers, truck stop and rest area workers, and workers that maintain and inspect infrastructure (including those that require crossborder travel).

Applicable to all exemptions, people must still observe recommended public health guidelines, such as “social distancing.”

The order can be found here: <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6819010-EO-20-20-FINAL-15580.html>

Although not necessary, if it provides some peace of mind to you and/or your employees, you'll find a template letter [here](#) to provide documentation to your employees as they travel back and forth to work. (Thanks to Travis at Arrowhead Auto Body in Duluth for sharing!)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Inventory

Governor Walz has issued an Executive Order directing non-hospital entities to inventory and preserve vital medical equipment during the COVID-19 Peace Time Emergency. The intention of the Executive Order is to see that certain types of medical equipment are reserved for use at health care facilities who are caring for people impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Emergency Executive Order specifically reads as follows:

1. Any Minnesota business...in possession of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) ventilators, respirators, or an anesthesia machines (including any consumable accessories to these devices) that are not required for the provision of critical health care services or essential services...must undertake an inventory of such supplies no later than March 25, 2020.

Paragraph 2 of the Emergency Executive Order provides a form for conducting the medical supplies inventory.

Paragraph 3 of the Emergency Executive Order provides as follows:

“Any Minnesota business...must refrain from using any such consumable equipment other than for use in delivering critical health care services or essential services requiring such equipment unless either donated to a local coordinating entity or prepare for the possibility of being asked to donate or sell it for use by critical health care workers.”

The critical issue here is a short supply of personal protective equipment nationwide. As the COVID-19 outbreak spreads, the Governor is trying to make sure that this equipment is available to frontline health care workers.

The responsibility of automotive repair shops to conduct the inventory and ultimately donate or sell this material is not necessarily a settled issue because auto repair workers are deemed essential but the equipment that they rely on is being prioritized for the health care system. AASP-MN is awaiting a response from the Governor’s office regarding this apparent conflict in the Emergency Executive Orders.

In the meantime, our best advice for members is to begin an inventory of the personal protective equipment that you have at your shop. A link to the form for undertaking the inventory is provided here: <https://mn.gov/ppe/>. Look for additional information in next week’s update.

Small Business Disaster Loans

On March 21st, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced that COVID-19 disaster loans are now available for Minnesota small businesses. According to DEED:

- This program can provide low-interest loans of up to \$2 million to small businesses and private nonprofits.
- These loans can go toward working capital to meet needs including payroll, accounts payable, and fixed debt payments that can’t be paid due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The current interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses. The nonprofit rate is 2.75%.
- These loans have long-term repayment options, up to a maximum of 30 years.

For more information, visit: <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=424149> or apply online at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, aka “CARES Act”

As you’ve no doubt heard from media reports, on March 27th a bi-partisan \$2.2 trillion deal to address the economic hardships that have been caused by the coronavirus was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law.

The plan will deliver a massive infusion of financial aid, including direct payments to individuals, unemployment insurance benefits and provisions for small business loans, such as:

- \$349 billion in small business interruption loans for paid sick or medical leave, employee salaries, mortgage or rent payments, utilities and any other debt obligations.
- An opportunity for small business borrowers to obtain loan forgiveness equal to the amount spent by the borrower during an eight-week period after the origination date of the loan on payroll costs, interest payment on any mortgage incurred prior to Feb.15, 2020, payment of rent on any lease in force prior to Feb. 15, 2020, and payment on any utility for which service began before Feb. 15, 2020.
- Deferment of loan payments for at least six months.
- Delaying payment of employer payroll taxes, relaxing limitations on use of losses from prior years and other tax relief to help keep employees on payroll.

We will provide more details on implementation as they become available.

U.S. Department of Labor Issues New Guidelines for Employers on COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division recently posted some useful information for employers on COVID-19.

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers](#)

This includes definitions of paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and of Expanded Medical Leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

Note: This content and analysis is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. Talk to a qualified attorney licensed for your state before taking any action.