



ALERTS

Updates And Resources, Minnesota's Extended COVID-19 'Stay Home' Order

April 15, 2020 | [Minneapolis](#)

On April 8, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz extended the state's stay-at-home order for nearly a month—until May 4, 2020 to further help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Beyond extending the order for individuals to stay at home, the newly issued [Executive Order 20-33](#) also extends the temporary closure of bars, restaurants and other public places. In addition, this latest order expands the list of exempted activities and critical sector workers.

Gov. Walz then signed an additional executive order on April 13, [which extends the peacetime emergency](#) in Minnesota until May 13 and allows the state to continue to take measures to respond to and provide relief for those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are several additional measures that have been implemented and steps that have been taken in numerous areas to help the citizens of Minnesota, and Minneapolis in particular.

Minnesota Courts

The Minnesota Judicial Branch has expanded the availability of remote hearing technology to allow cases to continue despite limited access to courthouses.

Following Gov. Walz's extension of the [original stay-at-home order](#), Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lori S. Gildea issued [a statewide order](#) on April 9, which supersedes all prior orders related to the outbreak. The order, which is effective immediately, maintains certain provisions from the prior orders, including restrictions for in-courtroom hearings,

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requiring hearings by remote technology for all other case types and hearings, and allowing for certain fine and fee due dates to be delayed by 60 days. The new order also provides that no new jury trials will begin before May 4 and details the procedure for media access to hearings.

Workers Compensation for COVID-19 Victims

The Minnesota Legislature also [passed a bill](#) that was signed by Gov. Walz last week to expand workers' compensation eligibility for first responders, such as peace officers, firefighters, paramedics, EMTs, corrections officers, security counselors, and certain health and childcare workers, who contract COVID-19. In essence, the law creates a presumption that any coronavirus exposure was work-related, stating "The employee's contraction of COVID-19 must be confirmed by a positive laboratory test or, if a test was not available for the employee, as diagnosed, based on the employee's symptoms, by a licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant or licensed advanced practice registered nurse (APRN)."

The order also notes that "the employer or insurer shall only rebut the presumption that the employee's contraction of COVID-19 is an occupational disease by showing the employee's employment was not a direct cause of the disease," potentially shifting the burden to employers to prove that any infected employee contracted the virus elsewhere.

Unemployment

To address an unprecedented number of applications for unemployment insurance, the Governor specifically issued [Executive Order 20-29](#) easing administrative requirements for obtaining benefits and requiring employers to notify separated employees that they can apply for unemployment insurance benefits. Such a notification requirement qualifies Minnesota, among other states that comply, to receive additional federal unemployment funds under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).

Minneapolis Gap Funding

Recently, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey announced a [gap funding package](#) that will dedicate more than \$5 million in citywide funding and new programming to help families and businesses who have been impacted by this crisis. Measures include:

- Small Business Debt-free Fund – For companies with 20 employees or less and people who are self-employed along with a revamped 2% loan program, adjusted to 0%
- Housing Stability Fund – \$2 million in emergency housing assistance payments for low-income residents and a \$1 million expansion of the existing Stable Homes Stable Schools' initiative to assist with other rental housing needs
- City Loans – Six months of forbearance and deferred payments for eligible and existing city-issued loans less than \$200,000 to home buyers and businesses

- Forgivable No-Interest Loans for Small Business – Fixed amounts of \$5,000 or \$10,000, depending on the need resulting from COVID-19, with a [deadline to apply by April 20](#)

Discrimination Helpline

Amid rising reports of COVID-related discrimination from the Asian American community, Gov. Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan [launched a Discrimination Helpline](#) to allow those who experience or witness bias and discrimination to report incidents to the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. The Minnesota Human Rights Act protects the civil rights of all Minnesotans to ensure everyone can live free from discrimination.

In discussing the launch, the Governor stated, “Minnesotans are resilient people who support their neighbors when the going gets tough ... my message is clear: Viruses don’t discriminate, and neither do we.”

“There’s a distinct pattern in our nation’s history of increased discrimination during uncertain and trying times, of needing someone to blame. This is unacceptable and, as Minnesotans, we must work to break this cycle,” echoed Lt. Governor Flanagan.

To obtain more information, please contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorney with whom you work, or Madeline Buxton at 612-367-8775 or madeline.buxton@btlaw.com.

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