

**COVID-19 FAQs
FOR BUSINESSES IN PORTLAND
DURING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY &
REQUIREMENT TO STAY HOME**
www.portlandmaine.gov/COVID19

General

- 1. How do I know if my business is essential or non-essential?** The City Council has included a list of essential businesses as Exhibit A to their most recent Emergency Order, which you can find [here](#). If you are not included on this list, you are not essential. In addition, the Council decided to limit construction, real estate, and some professional service activities (see below for details), even though they are considered essential services.
- 2. What if the state has designated me as essential?** If you have been designated as essential by the state, but do not clearly fall within the City's list of essential businesses, please contact Dena Libner, Assistant to the City Manager for Constituent Services, at dlibner@portlandmaine.gov to discuss your situation.
- 3. Who can I contact if I have questions?**
For questions relating to construction activities, please contact the Permitting & Inspections Department at 207-874-8703 or permitting@portlandmaine.gov.

For questions relating to liquor or food licensees, contact Business Licensing at 207-874-8557 or bl@portlandmaine.gov.

For general questions, please call 207-874-8300 or email info@portlandmaine.gov.
- 4. How can I report a violation?** You can report violations of individuals to the Police Department by calling 207-874-8479 or send an email to: info@portlandmaine.gov. For violations of businesses, please contact 207-874-8557 or bl@portlandmaine.gov
- 5. What happens if I don't follow the state or City orders?** If you are caught violating the State order, you could be charged with a Class E crime, which comes with up to six months in jail and up to \$1,000 in civil penalties. If you are caught violating the City order, you could be subject to a \$500 civil penalty and costs of prosecution, and the suspension or revocation of your City business license. Many prohibited activities are violations of both the state and City orders.

Non-Essential Businesses

- 6. My business is not essential, can I do curbside pickup?** No.
- 7. Can I ship goods?** No.

- 8. Can my employees still work at the workplace if they stay six feet apart?** No.
- 9. The state still allows us to ship items. May we?** No. The City of Portland's order is stricter than the State order, and does not allow non-essential businesses to do curbside pickup or shipping.
- 10. What can my business do?** If your employees are able to work remotely, they may continue to do that. You may only conduct simple administrative functions from your location, which is strictly limited to things such as processing mail (not shipping products), depositing checks, completing payroll, and paying vendors.
- 11. If I have more than one employee at my non-essential workplace performing these administrative functions, are there any restrictions?** Yes. Ideally, you would stagger your employees so that they are not at the workplace at the same time. If that is not possible, you must ensure that the fewest number of employees possible are at the workplace together and that they implement social distancing requirements.
- 12. I previously contracted a project in the City of Portland to start in April. The work does not require a permit. Can I proceed with this project?** The current Emergency Order prohibits new projects from starting until April 27th unless the work is necessary to address a health or safety issue. This applies to both interior and exterior projects like painting, roofing, landscaping, etc.

Essential Businesses

- 13. I'm in the construction industry – what can I do?** In the City of Portland, you can only work on projects involving 1) essential infrastructure, such as roads and public buildings; 2) work that you received all necessary approvals (site plan, building permit, etc.) for on or before March 25, 2020; or 3) work that is necessary for health and safety. You must also follow best practices while on the job site, including keeping employees at least six feet apart whenever possible. The Permitting and Inspections Department has additional information available [here](#).
- 14. I'm in the real estate industry – what can I do?** You can only engage in real estate activities with respect to a property if 1) it has four or fewer units; 2) one of those units is occupied by the property owner; 3) you do not show any unit currently occupied by a tenant; and 4) you follow all state guidance applicable to conducting real estate activities, which can be [found here](#).
- 15. Can I show one unit in a five-unit condominium if that one unit is vacant?** No. Condominiums are still considered a multi-unit building. Any multi-unit building with more than four units cannot be shown if any of the units are occupied.

- 16. What are “real estate activities”?** Real estate activities include anything that you would do in-person with respect listing a property for sale, or selling or buying a property. This includes taking photos, showing a property, in-person closings, etc.
- 17. I run an accounting firm, and have staff come into the office to work on taxes and similar essential work. Can they do other special projects since they’re in the office anyway?** No, your staff should only be in the office to do the minimum necessary to support essential businesses. Additionally, if they are able to complete their work remotely, we would strongly encourage you to do that. Where employees are able to work from home, they should be allowed to do so.
- 18. Is there any guidance for sellers of food and alcohol?** Yes, the state Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations has published some memos on the sale of food and alcohol here: <https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bablo/home>.