



## **Recap of DECD Commissioner Heather Johnson Weekly Update Webinar on COVID-19 Pandemic Situation**

**Week #2 April 29, 2020**

### **General Information from Commissioner Johnson:**

We appreciate everyone taking the time to join us and recognize what a confusing, frustrating and frightening time this is for everyone. We have instituted these weekly 30-minute webinar updates as things change swiftly and the team at the State works to bring the most up-to-date information possible.

We know one of the biggest things on everyone's mind is the new [Executive Order, Stay Safer at Home](#), and accompanying ["Together We Are Maine: Restarting Maine's Economy Plan."](#) Everything shared today will be in the context of these two items.

The Executive Order and the Restarting Plan both build on the guiding principles that have been established in previous Orders that appear to be working to flatten the curve of the pandemic here in Maine. The priority is public health and safety and it is a cautious approach to assess how certain restrictions may be safely eased to permit more economic and personal activity.

The Restarting Plan has not been crafted in a vacuum but in close partnership with the private sector and in collaboration across State agencies and functions. The new Executive Order extends the effective dates of previous Executive Orders with a few changes, which I will outline. As we are looking at data and potential solutions and adjustments on a daily basis, I recommend that you check [our website](#) as well as the [Governor's COVID-19 websites](#) on a regular basis.

### **Updates on Extended Executive Orders and Further Guidance**

**Cloth Face Coverings** – Consistent with the US CDC guidance, individuals must wear face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are hard to maintain. The

[Executive Order](#) and the [Maine CDC](#) provides additional helpful guidance. In addition, the [Maine MEP](#) has a list of Maine companies who are making and selling cloth face coverings.

**Essential vs Non-Essential Businesses** – While the expansion of the types of businesses allowed to be opened in the staged Restarting Plan is NOT based on the concept of essential or non-essential, those businesses who have been deemed able to remain open under the previous Executive Order following the CDC guidance for appropriate health and safety protocols, may continue to remain open as under the previous order. These businesses should add the cloth face coverings requirement to their existing protocols. These businesses do not need to do any additional registration with DECD.

The Restarting Plan is based on core guiding principle of what businesses can be open safely. These decisions are being made in consultation with the private sector and using a team of public health and business experts. The process has been to look at what operational processes businesses and industries already have in place and updating them with guidance from public health experts. We understand that many of these protocols will feel onerous but they are critical for prevention of the virus spread. We also understand that it may be difficult to obtain some of the equipment needed to operate safely but continue to prioritize public health and safety.

### **Checklists and Badges**

The checklists for specific businesses types allowed to reopen under Stage One are now on the DECD website, along with the Checklist Compliance Form. The optional badge will be available for download soon. Businesses already open under the prior Stay Healthy at Home Order are not required to complete a checklist compliance form to remain open.

We will add to the checklists by Stages and add guidance as we go, based on what the data and science tell us. Please check back to our website regularly for updates.

We also recognize that many companies will not be specifically mentioned in any category or sector. If your business type is unable to work remotely, has not been designated as essential, and is not on the Stage One list, you should remain closed to the public. We ask that you consider the guiding principles in place through the Executive Orders of the public health and safety of you, your family, your employees, your customers and your community.

### **Updated Guidelines**

We have updated guidelines available on our website for all [curbside pickup](#) for all non-essential retail businesses. All non-essential retail may offer phone and online ordering if they can provide curbside pickup, delivery or shipping.

## **Appeals or Requests**

The DECD website has a request form for consideration of your plan to reopen. You may complete that form here: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/me/essential servicerequest>.

## **14-Day Quarantine**

Currently the 14-day quarantine is the only tool at our disposal for limiting spread from others coming to Maine from “hot spots” in other parts of the country. With regularly input from public health experts and from the business and innovation community, we continue to evaluate options for alternatives and will update the public whenever these become available. We also continue to abide by the travel advisories provided by the US CDC.

## **Continuing Feedback**

As the Administration works to re-open the economy and continues to strive to have a transparent process. We welcome your thoughts and feedback and look forward to reviewing all suggestions that are submitted. Please understand that we will take everything under advisement but may not be able to use every submission. [Using this comment form, please take a moment to share your thoughts on potential goals and initiatives or on issues we should address in the planning process.](#)

## **Specific Questions?**

Because we cannot address all questions in the time allotted, we ask that you address specific questions to [business.answers@maine.gov](mailto:business.answers@maine.gov). We will answer your question as soon as we are able.