

IS YOUR BUSINESS ESSENTIAL?

By [Diana F. Saturno](#) and [Catherine Hart](#)*

On March 23, 2020, Ontario Premier Doug Ford ordered that that all non-essential stores and services be closed by Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. (the "Order"). This follows a series of orders made by the provincial government, pursuant to its powers under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, made in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect Ontarians during these unprecedented times.

Businesses which provide essential services are exempt from this Order and may continue their operations.

On March 23, 2020, the provincial government released the list of businesses that are considered "essential services", clarifying which businesses will be permitted to remain open. These businesses include, but are not limited to:

- businesses that supply other essential businesses with support and supplies;
- businesses that sell food, pet food and supplies, and household consumer products;
- the Liquor Control Board of Ontario;
- the Beer Store;
- the Ontario Cannabis Store;
- capital markets;
- payroll divisions of any employer;
- gas stations;
- hardware stores;
- pharmacies;
- restaurants offering delivery and takeout;
- taxis;
- insurance;
- utilities;
- many construction services;
- certain health care services, including emergency dental care;
- legal services; and
- dry cleaners.

Teleworking and online commerce are also permitted for all businesses.



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For a complete listing of services deemed essential, click [here](#).

The Order will last for 14 days, however, the Premier stated that the Order may be extended if necessary.

If you have questions about your obligations as an employer with respect to the Order, please contact a member of Fogler, Rubinoff LLP's employment group.

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ⁱ R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9.