

MONTEREY COUNTY

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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MEMORANDUM

Date: March 19, 2020

To: Monterey County Cannabis Industry

Fr: Joann Iwamoto, Cannabis Program Manager

cc: Nicholas E. Chiulos, Assistant CAO

Subject: Impact of the Monterey County Health Officer Shelter in Place Order on commercial cannabis operations.

The Monterey County Health Officer Shelter in Place Order (“Order”) of March 17, 2020 states in relevant part that only Essential Businesses may remain open during the shelter in place. The Order defines and states that agricultural activities and Healthcare Operations are Essential Businesses. All legal cannabis businesses fall under one of these definitions. As such, all legal cannabis businesses may remain open. However, all cannabis businesses must observe Social Distancing Requirements as fully explained in the Order. Here is the link to the Monterey County *2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV or COVID-19)* webpage, which includes the Order: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Additionally, if a dispensary would like to offer curbside service the Bureau of Cannabis Control requires each licensee to request relief from the Bureau if they are unable to comply with any of the Bureau’s licensing requirements during a disaster. The Program requires a standard procedure of the curbside service and a record of approval from the Bureau of Cannabis Control.

Lastly, below are recommended strategies for cannabis businesses given the COVID-19 crisis:

Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:

- Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [38.0° C] or greater

using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.

- Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.
- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.

Separate sick employees:

- CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).

Know How COVID-19 spreads:

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Social distancing between employees and while in-store lines procedures:

- The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Implement an organized line system where people are spaced at least a few feet apart (ideally 6 feet).

Hand washing procedures:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean surfaces procedures:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- To disinfect, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

Disinfecting options include:

- Diluting bleach. To make a bleach solution, mix:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water; OR
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
 - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
- Alcohol solutions. Ensure solution has at least 60% alcohol.
- Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

In these uncertain times, we hope that you will stay safe and well. Should you have further questions, please contact Joann Iwamoto at 831-796-3017, or preferably, by e-mail at iwamotoj@co.monterey.ca.us.

Also, if you are a cannabis business owner and have questions related to your operations please reach out to your Environmental Health Specialist or call 831-755-4508 to speak with Health Department staff. For the latest information, please visit the following site:

<https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/health/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>