

COVID-19 UPDATE # 2

Please note, information and policies and policy concepts are constantly changing. Questions – contact Chris or Brian.

Unemployment

Waiting Week:

We have received several inquiries around the waiver of the one week waiting period for a worker to access unemployment. This has been on the table with the legislature and executive branch to be considered, and the idea has not received much push back that we have heard of. However, implementing it would be a major challenge. The State's computer system is not set up in a way that would readily or quickly adapt to that change. Our read on this at the moment is the Legislature will not move to waive the waiting week. We will keep you posted on that part of the conversation as it continues.

Unemployment Eligibility Rule:

There have been some questions around access to unemployment and what is allowed under the emergency rule (and what is being looked at for legislative adjustments). The '**flexibility**' rule allows for workers to take unemployment for coronavirus related reasons, such as quarantine, being sick with COVID-19, employer has curtailed operations due to corona virus, etc.

- Workers will not be disqualified from unemployment due to being furloughed, discharged/laid off or quitting due to a 'corona virus situation', and requirements for 'work search' and 'able to work' are waived for coronavirus situations.

We have attached the language of the [unemployment rule](#) here for your reference. There will likely be additional adjustments coming up, but this is the baseline to ensure individuals have access moving forward.

One final item to note in the unemployment conversation, is that the state is looking at how much money will need to be plugged into the unemployment insurance system. They are anticipating large amounts of Federal money coming to the states, but do not have dollar amounts yet. As such, they state is sorting out what the amount of State v.

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Federal money will be put into Unemployment to ensure it remains solvent, and rates do not significantly rise due to increased demand.

Oregon Stay Home Order

As you have likely seen, Kate Brown finally issued a [Statewide Stay Home Order](#) on Monday morning, and outlined specific businesses that would need to close. **The businesses required to close were limited to those that require 'direct physical contact' with customers**, such as salons, gyms, yoga studios, etc. It additionally re-specified that restaurants and bars can only do take out, and not serve patrons on the premises. All businesses and non-profit entities with offices in Oregon SHALL facilitate telework and work-at-home by employees, to the maximum extent possible. Work in offices is prohibited whenever telework and work-at-home options are available – depending on duties. More types of businesses could see restrictions in the future.

For now at least, **construction and service work is still allowed in the state** (along with most businesses), though all businesses are required to be safe in how they are minimizing risks of COVID-19. Businesses that do not comply with COVID safety will be closed until they comply. OSHA has been tasked with investigating businesses that are reported as not complying. We have been in constant communication with the Governor's office emphasizing the importance of the construction industry, and the fact that we are an essential service/industry should a more robust order go into place.

At the Federal level, the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) specified the 14 essential infrastructure areas, and the workforce therein. [The CISA memo](#) and [guidance on critical infrastructure sectors](#) helps provide a baseline for states that go into shutdown, and informs what a federal lockdown could look like. It does cover construction, and we have been on the line with Oregon's federal delegation for the last week to clarify how important it is that we are included as essential in any federal orders.

While construction is broadly included in the CISA guidelines, we continue to emphasize that it is important to clarify construction *is essential* as explicitly as possible to ensure there is no confusion around our workers and contractors following any lockdown orders.