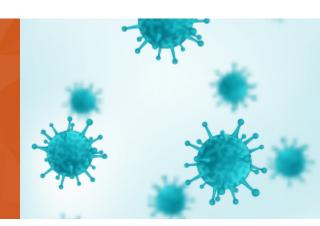


Employment Law Alert: Emergency Orders

Governor Issues Emergency Orders that Require Most MA Employers to Modify Business Operations

By:Matthew L. Mitchell March 16, 2020



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On Sunday, March 15, 2020, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker announced emergency orders in response to the Coronavirus outbreak that directly affect Massachusetts employers.

Specifically, the Governor directed, in material part:

- A suspension of educational operations at all public and private elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth;
- A prohibition of gatherings of over 25 people, including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based events, sporting events with spectators, concerts, conventions, fundraisers, parades, fairs, festivals, and any similar event or activity that brings together 25 or more persons in a single room or single space. (This prohibition expressly prohibits gatherings of more than 25 people in open work spaces, such as conference rooms.)

The Governor's emergency orders take effect on *Tuesday, March 17, 2020*, and are scheduled to remain in place through April 5, 2020, unless otherwise ordered.

The Governor has not ordered the general closure of private-sector employers in Massachusetts. However, taken together, the effect of the emergency orders requires most private-sector employers to significantly modify their business operations. Specifically, the orders require most employers to: limit access to co-working spaces; and transition employees to teleworking environments to accommodate childcare responsibilities.

In anticipation of employment disruptions that will result from the emergency orders, the Governor also announced expanded unemployment insurance protections for Massachusetts workers impacted by Coronavirus-related work stoppages. In addition, the United States Congress is *now* considering an economic stimulus bill that may include certain paid leave benefits for employees who suffer medical conditions or periods of unemployment related to Coronavirus.

The Morse Employment Law Team is following this topic closely. Please contact us should you have any questions.

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