



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
DIVISION OF ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH
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Interim Guidance for Horticulture

April 6, 2020
Updated May 6, 2020

This guidance is provided for greenhouse operations, landscapers, arborists, garden centers, and nurseries. This guidance may be updated.

Background:

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

On March 24, 2020, Governor Mills signed [Executive Order 19 FY 19/20](#) with a new directive mandating that all non-essential businesses and operations in Maine close their physical locations that are public facing, meaning those that allow customer, vendor or other in-person contact.

The Executive Order excludes businesses that provide essential services including, but not limited to: food processing, agriculture, industrial manufacturing, construction, trash collection, grocery and household goods (including convenience stores), home repair and hardware and auto repair, pharmacy and other medical facilities, biomedical, behavioral health and health care providers, child care, post offices and shipping outlets, insurance, banks, gas stations, laundromats, veterinary clinics and animal feed and supply stores, shipping stores, public transportation, and hotel and commercial lodging.

Note that the proclamation does not compel any business designated as essential to continue to operate. The Department recognizes that the practicalities of and risks posed by staying open as a business can be difficult during these unprecedented times. It is ultimately the business owner's decision to continue to stay open, adjust schedules and routines, or to shut down.

On March 31, 2020, Governor Mills signed [Executive Order 28 FY 19/20](#) that restricts the number of people allowed at essential businesses at any one time. The number of people who may enter essential business' retail space is as follows:

- Less than 7,500 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 5.
- More than 7,500 and less than 25,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the

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store at one time to 15.

- More than 25,000 and less than 50,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 50.
- More than 50,000 and less than 75,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 75.
- More than 75,000 square feet limit the number of customers in the store at one time to 100 and install protective shields between customers and checkout clerks as soon as practicable.

The staged state reopening [plan](#) announced by the Governor on April 28, 2020 does not change how agricultural businesses operate other than to require that [cloth face](#) masks be worn where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The Department's guidance regarding implementing sanitation and physical distancing measures available on its COVID-19 [website](#) remain appropriate for farms, food producers and other ag businesses to utilize in their daily operations.

Horticultural Operations:

For horticultural operations, the Department defines the following businesses/activities as consistent with Executive Order 19 FY 19/20:

- Production, movement, maintenance, and sale of vegetable plants and seeds, nursery stock, trees, and plants by licensed greenhouse, farm and nursery operations.
- Tree and shrub trimming and removal for disease, safety, and public health purposes.
- The placement and ground maintenance of sod, landscaping plants, flowers, ornamentals, and trees on residential and commercial grounds.
- Transportation necessary to meet any of the above functions.
- Agribusiness, including the sale and application of pesticides, fertilizers, minerals, and compost that support any of the above functions.
- Companies that specialize in lawn care, landscape maintenance, tree care, and irrigation.

If a business does not fall within this guidance, but you believe that it is essential or it is an entity providing essential services or functions, you may request designation as an essential business. [Request designation as an essential business.](#)

For Employees

Cleaning/Disinfecting and Social Distancing:

All facilities must practice social distancing, and proper cleaning and sanitizing of those facilities. This includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done:
 - ✓ Before and after eating.
 - ✓ After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
 - ✓ After touching face, hair, cellphone, and/or clothing.
 - ✓ After using the restroom.
 - ✓ Before handling food.
 - ✓ After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
 - ✓ After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

It is encouraged that businesses post [signage](#) with handwashing procedures in prominent locations to promote hand hygiene. Clean and disinfect buildings and equipment as outlined in the [CDC guidance](#).

If you need more information about the State of Maine response to Covid-19 please follow the links below.

Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF)

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/covid19/index.shtml>

Maine CDC

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)

<https://www.maine.gov/mema/response-recovery/incident-management/covid-19-response>