

PF COVID 19 Update
March 25th, 2020

To Our Preston Feather Team,

One down, 20 days to go on Governor Whitmer's executive order to stay-at-home and non-essential business closure! Here's what we learned yesterday:

"Essential Businesses"

We were open Tuesday after reviewing the executive order to confirm we met "essential business" criteria. The short version is that all suppliers of wood building material products fit this definition. The rationale is related to providing products for repairs and reconstruction of critical infrastructure, as defined by the federal government. Most of our suppliers and competitors also were open. This has been consistent throughout the country in states under stay-at-home orders.

However, we did not know as of Monday night how our professional builder & contractor customers would interpret how they would be categorized - essential or non-essential businesses? Limited guidance was provided by the state until some responses were posted on the states FAQ web site late Monday.

We soon learned there was confusion at the State of Michigan. Lansing was flooded with calls to clarify how the order applies to each business. "The governor had to put this [executive order] into action quickly," Attorney General Dana Nessel told the Detroit Free Press.....there are a lot of questions, I think, about what compliance actually looks like, and who is covered by the order and who is not." Local law enforcement authorities do not know how to enforce complaints and they are referring calls to the Attorney General's office.

No wonder we're all a little confused!

No matter what the state did, we made safety moves to close our stores to walk-in traffic and work remotely from our homes.

We Talked To Our Customers

On Tuesday, we polled many of our customers to learn how they interpreted the executive order. We found 2/3 of our contractor accounts said they would stop or limit their construction activities until April 14th when the current executive order expires. The consensus from these customers was that they did not strictly meet the "repair or reconstruction of critical infrastructure" Federal criteria of essential businesses and they wanted to reduce virus exposure risks for their employees and the community.

We also found other customers that do believe they meet some or all of the criteria to continue operations under the executive order.

Many of our customers are asking us for guidance on if they can continue to do construction activity under the executive order. Our customers must answer this question by reading Governor Whitmer's the executive order, reviewing the State of Michigan's FAQ responses to clarify the order, reviewing the Michigan HBA interpretation of the order, and consulting their own professional advisors. We must advise our customers that Preston Feather cannot provide legal advice for our customers and will not be responsible for customer activities that do not comply with the order. Most important – we will not compromise the safety of our employees or the community. Links to the above referenced information are provided below.

The World Keeps Turning. We Must Be Ready.

We are on Day 2. Our builders and homeowners are already making plans for starting construction again on April 14th. While our #1 plan is to beat the COVID 19 virus, we also know our customers will have cabin fever and plenty of time on their hands. When the executive order is lifted, I anticipate it will be like frost laws lifting after the longest winter ever!

All our customers (business owners) plan to keep some form of skeleton staff working on planning for when the stay-at-home order expires April 14th. We expect they will be home-bound but working. They will want Preston Feather to continue to support them on a remote basis. This includes communicating electronically and by phone on take-offs, plans, bids and material plans. We understand that remote work that does not require face to face contact, travel or work on a job site is permitted under the executive order since it meets all restricted COVID 19 virus exposure activities.

Our sales staff is working remotely and closed our doors to walk-in traffic. We encountered and now have fixed problems with our virtual private network (VPN) connection, providing access to Outlook, Spruce and shared files on the Public drive.

With fewer customers working, we will reduce our store hours as follows:

- Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Saturday - Closed

Summary

Only 19 days to go! We need to keep in contact with our customers every single day to help them with planning and orders, and assist them wherever we can professionally and personally. We are set up to do a lot of construction planning and ordering work remotely.

Contact me or Lori Lunger immediately if you have any concerns about your safety while we continue scaled down operations.

If you do not have enough work to do, we will be re-assigning our team members to work on other internal projects where we can. We are also looking for ways we might help the community with some of our resources.

Kirk Jabara

Key links:

- Michigan Home Builders Association
 - o FAQs <https://hbaofmichigan.com/media/7048/JrAfQ72gRvcV.pdf>
 - o March 23rd Interpretation of Executive Order <https://hbaofmichigan.com/media/7044/MT916PTRhEqv.pdf>
 - o March 24th update and correction regarding new construction <https://hbaofmichigan.com/media/7049/UC4LeOmby12a.pdf>
 - o March 24th call to action request <https://hbaofmichigan.com/media/7057/gTpclN9xx7mj.pdf>
 - o Job Site COVID 19 Safety Tips video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KI7-oGnpFck&feature=youtu.be>
- Executive Order – State of Michigan

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2019-2020/executiveorder/pdf/2020-EO-21.pdf>