

Preston Feather COVID-19 Update

Frequently Asked Questions

What is an “essential business” under Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order 2020-21 (COVID01-19)?

The Governor Whitmer issued executive order 2020-21 to temporarily suspend activities not necessary to sustain or protect life. This order suspended “non-essential” business activities effective March 24th at 12:01 a.m. through April 13th. This order requires suppliers and customers, who are also essential businesses under this act, confirm the essential nature of their involvement in the supply chain.

The first section of the order makes clear its intent: “This order must be construed broadly to prohibit in-person work that is not necessary to sustain or protect life”.

The order uses a reference to federal guidelines for businesses deemed essential during emergencies and national security. The order included business categories and industries added by Governor Whitmer tailored to Michigan’s needs at this time.

What are examples of essential businesses, under this order, in Michigan?

Most commonly identifiable examples are grocery stores, banks, gas stations, hospitals, insurance companies, hardware stores, and more.

Are essential businesses only allowed to sell life sustaining products or products related to critical infrastructure?

No. Businesses often sell a variety of products and services, including products that directly support the community during the COVID-19 crisis. For example, grocery stores sell lawn chairs, ice melt and lottery tickets. Hardware stores sell bird seed, key chains and lawnmowers. Insurance businesses sell jet-ski insurance.

The intent of the order was to reduce customer traffic and group contact in businesses and allow more people (customers and employees) to shelter-in-place. The intent was intended to keep other important businesses open during this critical time.

It sounds like Preston Feather sells some products that would fit the “essential business” category. Do we?

Yes. Among other things, we are a big hardware store. Our business stocks and special orders hardware store products. Our products are supplied by Orgill, a company in which we own

shares. This company is identical to Ace, True Value, Do-it-Best and other hardware distribution / retail businesses.

Like Home Depot, Lowes, Menards and other lumber yards/building centers, Preston Feather meets federal essential business guidelines as part of the wholesale/distribution of wood products supply chain, providing building materials for repair and reconstruction of buildings considered critical infrastructure to sustain or protect life. Preston Feather also provides cleaning, disinfectant, masks, gloves and other safety related supplies like other hardware stores and home building centers.

Are essential businesses the same in each state that has issue a shelter-in-place order like Michigan?

No, it varies. Many states identify construction activity as an essential business. Some states identify There are some politics involved as lobbying groups and state governments represent state-specific interests.

Grocery stores, markets, food banks, convenience stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, restaurants (take out, delivery, drive-thru), health care operations, child care facilities, gas stations and laundromats are commonly identified as essential.

The definition of essential is extended to other businesses state by state. Examples include mail and shipping; building and construction; auto supply and repair; warehouses/distribution; funeral homes and cemeteries; animal shelters and rescue groups; faith-based establishments; contractors with critical government services, pet supply stores, liquor stores, farms, recreational and medical marijuana dispensaries.

If Preston Feather is OK to operate as an essential business, why have we suspended our showroom and contractor desk materials sales and delivery operations?

Safety precautions was the biggest factor. Suspension of construction activity by 2/3 of our customers was another. Confusion in the community about what “essential businesses” are was the third factor. Some of our communities had the perception (understandable, but incorrect) that “essential business” was a literal term related to all the products we sell and we were not in compliance with the law.

Are there exceptions that allow us to sell products to customers while the order is in effect?

Yes. Under the Governor’s order, businesses may present documentation in the form of hardcopy or email that they conduct business activities meeting the essential business activity

guidelines. They may take the form of a *Declaration of Essential Business Activity, Assignment of Preston Feather as an Essential Supplier*, or similar document clearly establishes the customer's compliance with the order and Preston Feather's essential supplier relationship in the supply chain. The customer will also be asked to sign a Preston Feather form confirming compliance with executive order 2020-21 and our safety procedures for job site deliveries.

We have a limited number of staff scheduled to work at each location under the duration of the executive order. We will make every attempt to service customers in this category needing our assistance during this difficult time.

What about DIY (cash) customers – can they order and pick up materials at the store?

Generally, no. Emergency or financial hardship situations will be reviewed under a case by case basis, but safety is first. Discuss with store manager or contact Troy Bamberg (231) 838-6168, Kirk Jabara (231) 675-7627 or Rachel Jabara (231) 675-1236 directly.

What about contractor accounts - can they order and pick up materials at the store?

Generally, no. Emergency or financial hardship situations will be reviewed under a case by case basis, but safety is first. Discuss with store manager or contact Troy Bamberg (231) 838-6168, Kirk Jabara (231) 675-7627 or Rachel Jabara (231) 675-1236 directly.