



March 24, 2020

Re: *Mandatory Closure with Exceptions for Essential Businesses*

Dear Monroe Businesses,

On March 23, 2020, Governor Inslee issued a Proclamation directing all residents immediately to heed current State public health directives to stay home, except as needed to maintain continuity of operations of essential critical infrastructure sectors and additional sectors as the State Public Health Officer may designate as critical to protect health and well-being of all Washingtonians. This order goes into effect Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at midnight (2400 hrs).

Prior to the order, some of you reached out to the city requesting guidance on who is designated as "essential businesses" and would be allowed to operate during a shut down. The Governor's office has provided a list of ["Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers"](#) to help state, local, tribal, and industry partners as they work to protect communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security.

Please review the PDF link above (If you are unable to view the link please contact me directly on my cell listed below) and if you feel your business is identified as an "essential businesses", we would ask you to please notify us and let us know the address of the facility where workers will be present and the number of employees who will be present. We also ask that businesses operating during the shutdown do their best to reduce staff to only those necessary for basic operations/production, plan to ensure social distancing on production lines and follow other guidelines outlined in the [US Dept. of Labor/OSHA Guidelines for workplace safety during the COVID-19 outbreak](#). Any repeated violations of an order to cease operations of non-essential businesses will be referred to the Snohomish County Health Dept. who has the authority to close businesses during the quarantine. In the event of any disputes regarding what is and what isn't "essential", the determination will be made by the Washington Military Dept. During such a dispute the businesses will be closed and must submit a request for an exemption from [Disaster Area Re-Entry Application](#) website in order to re-open. The business will remain closed until an adjudication is reached by the WMD.

Neither the City of Monroe, nor the Monroe Police Department have any desire to make any arrests for violations of this order. The department views its enforcement role as one of engagement and education with the citizens, educating people on how to keep themselves and their families safe and most importantly, to keep the rest of the community safe, especially vulnerable populations.

We understand that the economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak are likely to be great. While we are keeping an eye on the immediate needs of the quarantine trying to keep our community safe, we have an eye on the recovery which will be national in scope and coordinated across state, county and local governments. The City, the Monroe Chamber, and the Downtown Monroe Association are working together to ensure that recovery happens as quickly as possible and our businesses are informed of the community's recovery strategy and is able to access those resources intended to help with the recovery. We will get through this together, as we have through previous crisis.

It goes without saying we are in uncharted waters. Even with the most diligent attempts at providing accurate information, the "Fog of War" often makes the situation nebulous at best. We will continue to update the business community on the status of the closure as well as announcements about the recovery and other forms of relief being made available. As always, the City of Monroe website will have the most current information on its special COVID-19 page. If you have questions please contact the Monroe Economic Development Specialist, James Palmer, at 360-631-0050 (cell) or email [JPalmer@MonroeWA.gov](mailto:JPalmer@MonroeWA.gov)

Thank you for your cooperation. Take care Monroe!

James Palmer  
Economic Development Specialist  
Main: 360-794-7400  
Cell: 360-631-0050  
[www.monroewa.gov](http://www.monroewa.gov)  
[www.monroewa.gov/934/COVID-19](http://www.monroewa.gov/934/COVID-19)