
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

March 26, 2020



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

COVID-19 — MINNESOTA — 3/26/20

Minnesota Legislature. The Minnesota legislature announced on Sunday, March 15, 2020, that the legislative session would recess for the following four weeks. House Speaker Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt, Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, and Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent announced that the legislature would work by alternate means until April 14. Throughout the recess, committees will meet on an on-call basis with advance notice given to the public, and legislation deemed critical can be brought to the House and Senate floors by agreement of both majority and minority leadership.

The legislature passed two spending bills to respond to the COVID-19 crisis: [Senate File 3813](#) transfers \$20.9 million from the general fund to the state's public health response contingency account, and [Senate File 4334](#) transfers \$50.0 million to the state's public health response contingency account and appropriates \$150.0 million for the creation of a health care response fund. Both bills have been signed by Governor Tim Walz.

Executive Orders. Governor Walz has issued the following executive orders in response to COVID-19:

- Emergency Executive Order [20-01](#), declaring a peacetime emergency in response to COVID-19.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-02](#), authorizing and directing the Commissioner of Education to temporarily close schools from March 18, 2020, through March 27, 2020. This Order encourages private and tribal schools to "fulfill the spirit and directives of this Executive Order." The number of days and hours of instruction required for district and charter schools under Minnesota statute are reduced by the closure period pending approval by the Executive Council.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-03](#), limiting visitor access to Minnesota's veterans homes except in certain compassionate care cases, such as end-of-life situations. The Executive Order grants Minnesota Veterans Homes the authority to prohibit admission to any person unless the person has been screened for symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-04](#), closing all bars, restaurants, and other places of public accommodation beginning March 17 at 5:00 p.m. and continuing until March 27 at 5:00 p.m. Included in the list of public facilities are restaurants, bars, breweries, wineries, theaters, fitness centers, recreational facilities, and outdoor sporting facilities. Places serving food and beverages are encouraged to offer their products through drive-through, delivery, or window service. Exempted from this Order are places of public accommodation that offer food and beverages not for onsite consumption, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, residential facilities, crisis shelters, and restaurants inside secured zones of airports.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-05](#), providing immediate relief to employers and unemployed workers during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. The Order suspends the Minnesota Unemployment Law and allows workers to become eligible for unemployment benefits without the statutory nonpayable week requirement, and establishes that absences from work are to be presumed involuntary in cases where public health would be at risk if the employee returned to work. The Order also excludes unemployment payments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic from future unemployment tax rate computations for a taxpaying employer.

- Emergency Executive Order [20-06](#), providing emergency relief from regulations to motor carriers and drivers operating in Minnesota, and waiving weight restrictions from vehicles transporting essential supplies on all roads in the state of Minnesota except the interstate system unless the Federal Highway Administration also waives its weight restrictions.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-07](#), authorizing the Commissioner of Management and Budget (CMB) to develop and implement a policy to provide paid leave to executive branch employees who are absent from work due to COVID-19, including caring for children during school closures. The Order also directs the CMB to redeploy executive branch employees from one state agency to another, suspends limitations on overtime and vacation approvals, and suspends other state employment requirements.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-09](#), directing the delay of elective inpatient and outpatient surgeries and procedures beginning on March 23 at 5:00 p.m. and continuing for the duration of the peacetime emergency declared in Executive Order 20-01 or until the Order is specifically rescinded.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-10](#), combatting price gouging practices during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. The practices prohibited include selling goods or services for more than 20.0% more than the price that good or service was offered for sale during the 30 days preceding Executive Order 20-01.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-11](#), directing the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services to seek federal authority to change or waive federal requirements applicable to its programs so that maximum aid and support may be provided to the public in response to COVID-19.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-12](#), allowing the Department of Human Services to waive or modify certain guidelines in order to expedite provision of services to the public in response to COVID-19.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-13](#), activating the National Guard and authorizing the adjutant general to procure goods and services needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including facilitating the transfer and transport of personal protective equipment in storage at Camp Ripley to the Minnesota Department of Health warehouse.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-14](#), suspending evictions and writs of recovery during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency beginning no later than March 24 at 5:00 p.m.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-15](#), directing the Department of Employment and Economic Development to develop a forgivable loan program to provide economic relief to small businesses. The loans will be between \$2,500 and \$35,000 and require no matching contribution.
- Emergency Executive Order [20-16](#), directing nonhospital entities to inventory personal protective equipment no later than March 25 and submit the inventory to the state of Minnesota. Businesses, nonprofit entities, and nonhospital health care facilities are directed to refrain from using any such consumable equipment other than for use in delivering critical health care services.
- As of March 25, 2020, there are 287 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Minnesota with 35 cases requiring hospitalization and 1 death. One hundred twenty-two patients no longer require isolation.

Sources: Minnesota Department of Health
State of Minnesota Executive Department
Minnesota State Legislature

LSA Staff Contact: Christopher Ubben (515.725.0134) chris.ubben@legis.iowa.gov

Doc ID 1133615