



UPDATE

REGARDING COVID-19

To Our Members

and Green Industry Professionals across the state of Ohio.

Over the past 48 hours, we have received hundreds of phone calls, emails and social media requests concerning the effects of COVID-19 (CORONA VIRUS) on our industry. Most of these requests have asked for clarification of Governor DeWine's "[Stay at Home Order](#)," and whether landscape contractors – specifically – are considered essential businesses during this time.

Based on the most recent communications with the Governor's office, they are asking each company to thoroughly review the "[Stay-At-Home Order](#)" and **CAREFULLY** decide if the work they are doing each day - during the shutdown period - falls under one of the business activities listed as essential. The Governor is leaving it up to you - the business owner - to **make** that determination, on a business by business basis.

Should you decide to work, it is stressed that you must follow the safety guidelines in Section 18 of the order. We acknowledge and applaud the sacrifices made by those companies that have decided to cease operations and advocate that all companies work with their legal counsel before determining the legality of their operations.

While we understand that this may be far from the YES/NO answer you are looking for, we have included some guidelines you can follow in making such a determination.

1. Is the work you are performing TODAY essential to the health, safety, and security of the general public?
2. Does this work for any reason put the health and safety of your employees, their families, or your clients at risk?
3. Can the work you plan on performing today be done at a later date, or is it of a time-sensitive nature?

We pose these questions to you because, for those of you who choose to continue to do business, these are the questions we have been told that you and your staff will need to be prepared to defend, not only to your local health department but to your peers, your employees, and the general public.

Furthermore, if you do determine that your business is providing essential services, we have outlined these industry best practices, along with any other procedures unique to your organization.

With Clients:

- Get verbal and/or written confirmation from your clients that they allow you to work on their property.
- Communicate, as accurately as possible, the times you plan to be on their property.
- Inform clients of the safety protocols your company has put in place, including but not limited to proximity rules (6 feet).
- Designate one on-site contact (potentially the foreman) for your clients. Ask them not to approach workers, other than this contact.
- Be prepared to cease working if a client raises any health or safety concerns.

With Staff:

- Allow employees who are uncomfortable working to stay home. (Some may have time-off they can use.)
- Be mindful of those employees currently receiving unemployment benefits that you have not called back yet. Given the number of people filing currently, it may be more difficult for them to reapply.
- Communicate and reinforce all safety protocols daily, via text and email. Also, communicate why the work you are doing, day to day, is considered essential.
- Train designated personnel (possibly foreman) to answer safety and health questions from the public clearly and concisely. We recommend written safety rules to be carried with employees.
- In instances where employees will be on one job site all day long, encourage meeting on-site, rather than at the shop.
- In instances where employees must report to the shop, stagger crew start times to minimize proximity issues.
- Businesses should operate with the least amount of employees necessary on any site.
- All employees should have their temperatures logged at the beginning and end of the workday.
- If at all possible, limit crews to one person per truck.
- In instances where two employees must travel together, pair employees together indefinitely. Assign them one truck that is not to be shared. Make sure the vehicle is as well ventilated as possible. Each vehicle should be sanitized at days end. If one employee becomes ill, both should be treated as if they are contagious. Follow CDC self-quarantine rules.
- Enforce sanitation of all common areas including trucks, storage rooms, offices, restrooms, etc.
- Wear proper PPE at all times. Store PPE in clear plastic bags, sanitizing PPE at the end of every day. DO NOT, for any reason, share PPE.
- Minimize the use of shared equipment, making sure to properly and fully sanitize all equipment after each use.
- Always maintain proper social distancing (6 feet), unless necessary. In the event, employees must work close to one another, for heavy lifting, etc., wear a face mask and gloves. Once separated, immediately wash/sanitize hands.

Being designated as a company allowed to perform work essential to the health and safety of the general public should be viewed as a privilege, not an entitlement. This privilege is not one to be taken lightly, as the Governor's office has shown over the past few weeks that when proper safety measures are not being followed, they will move quickly to cease ALL operations. It is important to understand that your compliance with these measures effects not only you and your company, but all landscape professionals across the state.

The Ohio Landscape Association will continue to provide facts and information from credible sources during this strenuous time to assist all members to make the business decisions they alone must make. We will continue to monitor the situation and provide as much information as possible on our website (<http://www.ohiolandscape.org>), via email and through our Facebook page.

PLEASE NOTE: The Governor specifically asked that you DO NOT contact your local officials for an interpretation of the Director's Stay Home Order. They did clarify it was up to local law enforcement and local health departments to enforce the order, you should be prepared to defend your interpretation of essential work during this period (Thru April 6th, 2020 and beyond, should the current rules be extended).

Sincerely,

Sandy Munley
Executive Director
Ohio landscape Association

