



## **The World of COVID-19**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) was first identified in Wuhan, China and reported by the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019.

It has now spread to countries across our globe. The United States currently has cases in every state and the District of Columbia. The first case of COVID-19 in Louisiana was reported on March 9, 2020. As you read this, Louisiana has had over 29,000 people test positive for COVID-19 with a death toll of over 2,000.

It's important to stay informed and prepared while following the advice from the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), relevant state and local authorities, and health care professionals.

As we know, public health is a shared responsibility. As contractors, employers, members of our communities, and family members, we all need to take measures to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. The CDC has advice on how families, schools, and businesses can plan for and respond to the virus.

You can find CDC recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## **State of Louisiana Response**

On March 22, 2020 Governor John Bel Edwards issued a statewide Stay at Home Order to fight the spread of COVID-19 in Louisiana. The order went into effect on March 23, 2020 and is set to expire on Friday, May 15, though it may potentially be lengthened. To read the Governor's order, click [HERE](#).

The Governor's order limits public access to restaurants, bars, and casinos, amusement parks, malls, personal care and grooming. Members of the public have continued to be allowed to go to grocery stores and pharmacies to pick up food, medicine and necessary supplies, go to their essential jobs and to go outside for exercise.

## **Here is what this Stay at Home Order has meant for Louisiana's construction industry:**

Prior to Governor Edwards order, ABC joined with other members of Louisiana's construction community requesting that the Governor consider the essential nature of construction industry should a Stay at Home order be discussed. You can find that document [HERE](#).

In defining essential jobs, Governor Edwards' order states that "guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) on what workers are essential is outlined [HERE](#)." Businesses and workers performing functions outlined in the CISA memo are deemed essential and may continue to work under the Governor's directive.

The Governor's Office provided additional illustrative examples of Critical Infrastructure Businesses consistent with CISA Guidance that can be seen [HERE](#). These examples indicate that Essential Infrastructure entails many business categories. Those relevant to the construction industry include:

- Construction, including, but not limited to, construction required in response to this public health emergency, hospital construction, construction of long-term care facilities, public works construction, and housing construction
- Construction Engineers
- Building management and maintenance

To view a Q&A on the Governor's order, click [HERE](#).

ABC has been in constant discussions with Governor Edwards' Administration since COVID-19 cases began growing in Louisiana. We have provided valuable information and answered industry specific questions regarding the essential role of the construction industry during this outbreak.

## **State Legislative Response**

On March 16, 2020 after meeting with medical professionals, fellow legislators, and other state officials, Senate President Page Cortez and Speaker of the House of Representatives Clay Schexnayder, decided to temporarily adjourn the 2020 Regular Legislative Session until May 4, 2020.

Medical professionals anticipated that rapid growth would put a strain on health care access and facilities and recommended that growth would be best curbed by social distancing. With that in mind, the decision to temporarily adjourn was made. "The public health crisis at hand has placed the legislature in uncharted waters," said President Cortez. "With every decision we make, we are balancing the health and welfare of our citizens, staff, and legislators with our constitutional responsibilities. At this time, we believe it is in the best interest of our state to temporarily adjourn the session." Legislators have been directed by Senate and House

leadership to contact those stakeholders and citizens who have requested bills to update them on the status of the session.

### **Louisiana Business Resources**

Louisiana Economic Development (LED) Opens COVID-19 Help Desk for Louisiana Businesses  
Gov. John Bel Edwards and Secretary Don Pierson of Louisiana Economic Development have established an LED help desk that provides email and hotline support for Louisiana businesses impacted by COVID-19.

Email, hotline support from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday; more resources at:

<https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/covid19>

For COVID-19 business questions, LED may be reached at [LEDbiz@la.gov](mailto:LEDbiz@la.gov) or via the toll-free hotline, (833) 457-0531. The COVID-19 hotline is staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. Be aware that high call volumes might result in delays. Callers are encouraged to keep trying, leave a voice mail or contact LED via email.

### **ABC National Resources**

ABC National has a vast array of coronavirus resources on their coronavirus page:

<https://abc.org/Coronavirus>

Your questions on employer and employee resources, as well as in-depth information on National, State, and Local governmental regulations can be quickly answered by ABC's team in Washington D.C.

### **The Louisiana Path Forward**

Soon Louisianans and Louisiana businesses will begin progressing toward normalcy. Recognizing this transition, both Governor Edwards and the Louisiana Legislature have formed advisement teams to help safely and securely re-open Louisiana and re-build our economy.

We are fortunate to have many ABC New Orleans/ Bayou Chapter members on these important advisement teams, and we thank and applaud these industry and business leaders for devoting their leadership skills, resources and time to ensure Louisiana emerges from this pandemic stronger and smarter.

Getting Louisiana back in business will be a group effort and there is an opportunity here to help guide our state toward better economic output and increased economic opportunities.

If you would like to provide input, please don't hesitate to reach out to John Walters at [jwalters@abcpelican.com](mailto:jwalters@abcpelican.com) or anyone on the ABC New Orleans/Bayou Chapter. For more information on these task forces, visit the links below:

- <https://www.opportunitylouisiana.com/resilientlouisiana>
- <https://laertaskforce.com>