

ESSENTIAL BUSINESS AND GATHERING FAQ

On March 23, 2020, the City of Branson passed an essential business and social gathering ordinance to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. That law is **now in effect**. **The goal of the ordinance is to make sure that only essential businesses in the city are operating, people are practicing proper social distancing, people are not gathering in groups of more than ten people, and those essential businesses that are operating are operating in a manner consistent with the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control.** This is to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

1. AS AN INDIVIDUAL WHAT ARE MY DUTIES TO MY FELLOW CITIZENS?

As a duty to your fellow citizens to prohibit the spread of this virus, you are required to maintain a six-foot distance from non-family members and not gather in public or social gatherings of more than ten people.

2. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED PUBLIC GATHERINGS OR SOCIAL GATHERINGS?

Any type of social gathering or scheduled gatherings of people. The following would be examples of prohibited public or social gatherings:

- A wedding inviting fifty (50) people would be a public gathering.
- Twelve (12) coworkers meeting and eating together.
- Thirty (30) people waiting in line without maintaining social distancing of six feet to enter a store.
- Sunday service with four hundred (400) people in attendance.
- A neighborhood BBQ with more than ten (10) people in attendance.

3. CAN I VISIT OUR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES AND NURSING HOMES?

As a safety precaution to individuals over the age of sixty years old, visitation of nursing homes, long-term care facilities, retirement homes, or assisted living homes or any other facility where of guests or residents over the age of sixty outnumber those under the age of sixty is not allowed. The only exception is for people who are to provide critical assistance or care.

4. WHAT IS AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS?

An essential business is a business critical to the well-being of the citizens' infrastructure of the city and is defined specifically as follows: day care facilities which serve employees of essential businesses, health care facilities, grocery stores, convenience food stores, service stations, drug stores, pharmacies, public service or telecommunication facilities, financial institutions, law firms, accounting firms, government offices and facilities, lodging establishments, and restaurants.

5. WHAT IF I THINK I AM AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS AND I AM NOT IN THE LIST?

The Emergency Management Director or the City Administrator have been given the authority by the Board of Aldermen to make determination as to the classification of other businesses. For any questions about a specific business, please call (417) 243-2780.

6. IF I AM AN ESSENTIAL BUSINESS CAN I OPERATE AND BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC?

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Yes. Essential Businesses can operate within the City limits if they operate their enclosed public place in a manner that does not exceed twenty- five percent of the established occupant load of the enclosed public space, prohibit eating and drinking by the public and prohibit gatherings of more than ten people.

7. WHAT IF I AM NOT ON THE LIST OF ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES CAN I REMAIN OPEN TO THE PUBLIC?

No. Non-essential businesses are to remain closed to the public during this pandemic.

8. WHAT CAN I DO IF OPERATE A NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESS?

- A. You can continue operations consisting exclusively of employees, contractors, or other agents of those businesses performing activities at their own residences.
- B. You can allow **no more than ten people** of the business (owners, employees, agents) on the premises **if the premises are closed to the public.**

9. WHAT IF I HAVE AN EMERGENCY AT MY NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESS?

The Emergency Management Director and City Administrator are authorized to allow other people on the premises of any non-essential business as needed.

10. WHAT ABOUT RESTAURANTS?

Restaurants are closed to on-premises eating and drinking but can operate their existing drive-thru or provide pickup or carry-out service.

11. WHAT IS OCCUPANT LOAD?

Occupant load is the total number of persons that might occupy a building or portion thereof at any one time. This is determined by fire code.

12. WHAT IS AN ENCLOSED PUBLIC SPACE?

An enclosed public space is an enclosed area to which the public is invited or to which the public is permitted.

13. DOES OCCUPANT LOAD INCLUDE EMPLOYEES?

Yes

14. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF VIOLATING THE NEW OCCUPANT LOAD REQUIREMENTS?

- A convenience store that has an occupant load of one hundred (100) people more twenty-five (25) customers and employees present.
- A bank that has an occupant load of (50) people in the bank and has more than twenty (20) customers and employees present.

15. WHAT ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS?

Our schools are subject to the same rules limiting a gathering of ten (10) or more people and the new twenty-five (25%) occupant loads in enclosed public spaces.

16. WHAT ABOUT OUR GROCERY STORES?

Our grocery stores are subject to the same rules limiting a gathering of ten (10) or more people and the new twenty-five (25%) occupant loads in enclosed public spaces.

17. WHAT ABOUT OUR HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL FACILITIES?

They are exempt from these rules as treatment of people with COVID-19 and other ailments is the number one (1) priority of the City of Branson at this time.

18. WHAT ABOUT PET FOOD STORES AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE STORES?

Pet food stores and building maintenance stores have been determined to be “Essential Businesses” as they are critical to the well-being of the citizens and infrastructure of the city. See definitions below:

BUILDING MAINTENANCE, SALES AND SERVICE FACILITIES. Building Maintenance, Sales and Service Facilities is defined as contracting services such as building repair and maintenance, the installation of plumbing, electrical, air conditioning and heating equipment, janitorial services, and exterminating services and includes the retail sales of related supplies.

PET FOOD AND PET SUPPLY FACILITIES: Pet Food and Pet Supply Facilities means any business or facility that supplies pet food or pet supplies to the public at retail.

18. WHAT IF I HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND NEED GUIDANCE?

Please contact our Fire Department at (417) 243-2780.

REMEMBER THE GOAL IS TO ENSURE THAT THE PUBLIC IS PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING OF SIX FEET TO PROHIBIT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19