

BPOA Continuing Operations FAQ

1. Is the Department still processing licensing applications and renewals?
 - a. Yes. On March 16, Governor Wolf issued an emergency directive through the Office of Administration temporarily closing all Commonwealth offices and directing all eligible Commonwealth employees work from home. This directive was part of an aggressive mitigation effort to limit exposure to COVID-19 coronavirus for health and public safety. While Commonwealth offices are temporarily closed, licensees and applicants should continue to refer to application checklists and submit requested materials via the [PALS](#) online portal. Due to limited mail delivery and suspended telephone support, all support and licensing questions should be directed to the DOS [professional licensing](#) page.
 - b. **Renewal deadlines for many license types have been extended. Please see [this media release](#) for more information.**
2. Is my business essential under the Governor's issued guidance?
 - a. Governor Wolf initially urged non-essential businesses to temporarily cease operations in five counties on March 14 in order to limit the spread of Covid-19. That recommendation has since expanded to all non-essential businesses operating in the Commonwealth. **On March 19, 2020, Governor Wolf ordered all "non-essential" businesses to close by 8:00 P.M. Businesses failing to comply with this order will be subject to fines and penalties beginning Saturday, March 21, 2020.**
 - b. Examples of non-essential business include entertainment, hospitality and recreation facilities, concert venues, theatres, sporting event venues, golf courses and retail facilities (including shopping malls and health care facilities within retail operations.) The complete list of Essential vs. Non-Essential Businesses can be found at the Covid-19 Business Resources page [here](#). The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development offers working capital loans that could be of assistance to businesses impacted by COVID-19. The U.S. Small Business Administration, in addition to local funding partners, may also be a source of assistance for affected businesses. For information about unemployment compensation or worker's compensation, please click [here](#).

3. What if I decide to remain open for business?

- a. The Administration is aware of the financial impact and understands the tremendous sacrifice being asked of all business owners. Businesses deemed “essential” should still employ the preventative steps outlined by state and federal health officials (highlighted [here](#).) However, new cases of coronavirus continue to be reported every day, and additional steps have been necessary to stop the spread. **On March 19, 2020, Governor Wolf ordered all “non-essential” businesses to close by 8:00 P.M. Businesses failing to comply with this order will be subject to fines and penalties beginning Saturday, March 21, 2020.**

4. Is my school going remain open for business?

- a. On March 16th, in efforts to expand aggressive social distancing in all 67 Pennsylvania counties, all public K-12 schools, career and technical centers (CTCs) and intermediate units (IUs), child-care centers operating within those schools and all universities within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) suspended in-person instruction through March 29th. All other schools (including private, parochial, and institutions of higher education) should be consulted directly for the most current closure information. **Beginning March 19, 2020, all non-essential businesses must cease operations beginning at 8:00 p.m. Education providers electing to provide online courses should follow all applicable DOH, CDC and OSHA guidelines. Refer to your respective board page for specific guidance.**

5. How have concerns about spread of Covid-19 affected testing and background checks?

- a. As of March 17,2020, testing at Pearson Vue testing centers has been suspended for thirty (30) days due to public health and safety concerns. This may impact the following occupational exams: Auctioneer, Barber Examiners, Cosmetology, Engineer, Funeral, Osteopathic Medicine and Psychology. For more information regarding test delivery information affected by COVID-19, please visit the Pearson Vue help page [here](#).
- b. The National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) announced that Prometric test centers in the United States and Canada will suspend testing for thirty days (30) beginning March 17, 2020. More information can be found at NASBA’s page [here](#).
- c. PSI has temporarily closed their owned and operated physical test centers in the United States starting end of day March 19, which affects testing for the PA Real Estate Commission and expanded function dental assistants. For further information please visit their COVID19 page [here](#) .
- d. Many facilities for processing fingerprints for background checks are closed. Our most current list of open IdentoGO locations can be found [here](#).

6. Where can I find profession specific information about the COVID-19 response?

- a. Please check your board specific page [here](#) for profession and association information related to your profession.
- b. For a current list of healthcare professional regulation waivers, please go to this [page](#).
- c. The Drug Enforcement Administration COVID-19 [Information Page](#) is up and running and is being updated several times a day. It contains a significant amount of guidance and Q&A's concerning COVID-19. [This link](#) can be used to register your email address to receive updates on DEA's guidance and DEA's response.