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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

20-24

April 14, 2020

TWENTY-FIRST SUPPLEMENTAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION – REQUIRING CLOTH FACE MASKS AT WORK

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, I declared a state of emergency due to the dangers to health and life posed by COVID-19 and that declaration has been extended until at least May 8, 2020;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus continues to spread and threatens to overwhelm the State's ability to respond;

WHEREAS, aggressive and sustained efforts are necessary to slow the spread of COVID-18 and to lessen the strain on our healthcare system;

WHEREAS, on March 22, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-09 closing all close-contact businesses, public recreation and entertainment establishments and business service providers and on March 28, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-14 closing all non-critical retail businesses, both of which have been extended until at least May 8, 2020.

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that COVID-19 symptoms may appear as many as fourteen (14) days after exposure;

WHEREAS, the CDC has confirmed that a significant number of people infected with COVID-19 do not show symptoms;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is contagious and persons who are asymptomatic can spread the virus;

WHEREAS, notwithstanding the spread of COVID-19, a number of critical businesses remain open and some of their employees must be physically present at the work site, requiring further measures to keep such employees safe; and

WHEREAS, the CDC now recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GINA M. RAIMONDO, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, pursuant to Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution and the Rhode Island General Laws, including, but not limited to, Title 30, Chapter 15, and Title 23, Chapter 8, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. All employees of Rhode Island's customer/client-facing businesses and non-profit organizations, office-based businesses and non-profit organizations, and any other such business category as determined by the Department of Business Regulation (DBR) that are still in operation shall wear cloth face coverings unless an employee can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other employees for the duration of his or her work (e.g., solo office) or unless doing so would damage the employee's health. All such employees must wear face coverings in any entry, exit and common areas of the business, including, but not limited to: check-in, registration, reception, hallways, bathrooms, breakrooms, time clock areas, elevators, stairways, etc.

2. All such businesses must provide, at their expense, face coverings or materials for the making of such face coverings for their employees. Such coverings or materials may be made available staff-wide or individually upon employee request so long as the result is organization-wide use of face coverings. Nothing shall prevent an employee from fashioning his or her own cloth face mask.

A CDC tutorial for do-it-yourself cloth face masks is available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html

3. Nothing shall prevent an employee from wearing a surgical grade mask or other more protective face covering if the person is already in possession of such equipment, or if the employer is otherwise required to provide its employees with more protective equipment due to the nature of the work involved.

4. All customer-facing businesses shall take steps to require customers to wear face coverings, including the posting of such requirement at the entrance of the business and such other steps as may be required by DBR. No person under two years of age or any person whose health would be damaged thereby shall be required to wear a face covering.

5. I hereby authorize and direct the Director of DBR to take any action and make and enforce any rules and regulations necessary to implement this Executive Order, including unannounced visits and inspections.

6. The Director of DBR is further authorized to assess civil penalties against employers and enact rules and regulations in furtherance of such penalties, for violation of this Executive Order. Such civil penalties shall be in addition to any other penalties authorized by law.

7. Non-compliance with this Order can be reported by emailing DBR at https://www.DBR.ri.gov or calling the DBR hotline at (401) 889-5550.

This Order shall take effect on Saturday, April 18, 2020 and shall remain in full force and effect until Monday, May 18, 2020 unless renewed, modified or terminated by subsequent Executive Order.

So Ordered:

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor