

March 16, 2020

## **Governor Issues Executive Order on the Closure of Governmental and Private Sector Operations to Combat Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Executive Agencies and Other Branches Follow With Guidance**

Late Sunday, March 15, 2020, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Wanda Vazquez, issued OE-2020-023 mandating a general curfew closing most governmental operations and business activities starting, March 15, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. until March 30, 2020. Several agencies and the Judicial Branch have issued additional guidance on the matter.

There are many questions related to the scope and implementation of OE-2020-023 and further information will follow as available.

### *Executive Order*

The order is intended as a general lockdown requiring businesses to close and citizens to remain at home. However, OE-2020-023 exempts the following activities:

Food retail or wholesale businesses providing services through drive-thru, carry-out, or delivery only, including prepared foods, medications or medical equipment, pharmacies, supermarkets, gas stations, banking or financial institutions, nursing homes, or other businesses related to the food, medical products, or fuel supply chains.

This curfew will also allow citizens to travel or walk along public roads from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. only on the following circumstances:

Purchasing food, pharmaceutical, and basic necessity products; (b) keeping medical appointments or visiting a hospital, laboratory, or healthcare facility; (c) going or coming from a workplace whose closure has not been ordered hereunder, public and private employees who perform essential work; (d) returning to your usual place of residence from an allowed activity; (e) to provide assistance, care, transportation of senior citizens, children, dependents, people with disabilities or people who require any type of medical or professional attention. The above, provided that all necessary precautions are taken to prevent infection; (f) visiting financial institutions.

Further, the curfew on individuals shall not apply to individuals duly identified as public or private security agency employees at the state and federal level, health professionals; hospital, personnel working in hospitals, pharmacies, pharmaceutical companies, bioscience facilities or health centers; personnel working in the wholesale food and product manufacturing and supply chain,



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from their origin to consumer retail outlets; personnel working with utilities or critical infrastructure; call centers; ports and airports personnel; members of the press; or citizens who are addressing emergency or health situations. These individuals shall be authorized to travel on public roads to and from work when necessary.

Specific interpretation of the scope of the terms used in OE-2020-023 as well as industry-specific interpretations is being issued by the agencies and other branches of government. Following are summaries of the most relevant ones to date:

### *Executive Agencies*

The Puerto Rico Tourism Company notified that restaurateurs can operate carry out and drive through facilities, but not host guests in their premises. Restaurants located in hotels can also operate for takeout or delivery and bars inside restaurants will be closed.

The Puerto Rico Justice Department stated that the Property Registry will be closed until March 30, 2020 with electronic filings available through Digital Karibe (<http://ridpr.pr.gov>).

The Puerto Rico Department of State extended the deadline for filing annual reports, originally due on April 15, 2020, to May 15, 2020. Extensions may be requested up to June 15, 2020 with the possibility of an Additional Extension up to July 15, 2020.

Interpretations pertaining to the application of OE-2020-023 to major bio pharma, pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing on the island is expected shortly. However, be advised that a restrictive interpretation is possible, requiring the lock down of certain manufacturing facilities in industries not deemed critical.

### *The Judicial Branch*

The Judicial Branch issued a press release indicating that all hearings and court appearances scheduled between March 16, 2020 and March 30, 2020 have been suspended. Limited criminal proceedings and family matters will be addressed. Details including term extensions will follow.

We will keep you abreast of further relevant information.

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