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**Butler County
General Health District**

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Butler County General Health District, 513.863.1770

Is a Fulfillment Center an Essential Business in Butler County?

BUTLER COUNTY, OH - The Butler County General Health District (BCGHD) has received many questions on whether or not fulfillment centers filling orders for things such as clothing or home goods are considered essential businesses under the Ohio Department of Ohio Health Director's Stay at Home Order.

Carrie Yeager, BCGHD Environmental Health Director states, "Under section 9 of the Essential Infrastructure clause in the Stay at Home Order, distribution or fulfillment centers are considered essential businesses. Essential businesses may stay open but must still operate with caution and follow social distancing requirements, like staying 6 feet away from coworkers if they must be on site."

To stay within compliance of the Stay at Home Order, the order requires that businesses deemed essential must meet the following:

- **Basic Minimum Operations:**
 - Operate with the minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the businesses inventory.
 - Preserve the condition of the business's physical plant and equipment.
 - Ensure security.
 - Process payroll and employee benefits, or related functions.
 - Must allow employees of the business to be able to work remotely from their residences.

- **Social Distancing and Cleaning Requirements:**
 - Maintain 6-foot social distancing from other individuals.
 - Separate employees who appear to have acute repository illness symptoms from other employees and send them home immediately.

- Allow employees to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer.
 - Encourage employees to coughs or sneezes. Encourage sick employees to stay at home until they are fever free for 72 hours without medication AND symptoms have improved for at least 72 hours AND seven days have passed since symptoms began.
 - Frequently perform enhanced cleaning of the facility. This includes cleaning all door handles, railings, countertops, work stations. Be prepared to change your business practices if needed or even temporarily suspend business operations.
 - Do not shake hands.
 - Vulnerable populations of customers must have separate operating hours.
- **Additional Requirements:**
 - Do not require a health care provider's note for either illness or return to work.
 - Sick leave policies must be up to date, flexible, and non-punitive to allow sick employees to stay at home.
 - Reinforce key messages of stay at home when sick, cover coughs and sneezes, and practice good hand washing.

"If an essential business cannot comply with the Stay at Home Order requirements, they should not be operating at this time," stated Yeager. The Stay at Home order gave local health departments the authority within their jurisdictions to make their own decisions and interpretations about businesses that were not specifically listed in the order. Local health districts will not always be in complete agreement and that is allowable.

When the BCGHD receives a complaint on any business, a staff member contacts the business in question. BCGHD staff asks the business about their operations, and requests details regarding their social distancing and cleaning practices. A thorough and factual investigation may take several days before next steps are taken. Many of the complaints that the BCGHD receives only include basic information, like the business name. When calling or emailing about businesses that are believed to be out of compliance with the Stay at Home Order, please include their name, address and contact information.

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