



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Butler County
General Health District**

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For Immediate Release

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Who Determines an Essential Business in Butler County?

HAMILTON: The Ohio Department of Health Director, Dr. Amy Acton's Stay at Home Order went into effect on March 23, 2020. Since then, BCGHD has received 3,786 phone calls from concerned citizens, employees, and business owners.

BCGHD is working through each call, and making the appropriate contact or conducting follow up as quickly as possible. "We are taking every call seriously. We are investigating every complaint that comes in. We may not have the personnel to act on it that same day, but we will investigate it," states Carrie Yeager, Environmental Health Director.

If a business owner is questioning whether they are essential or not, they mostly likely are not. Even if the business is essential the guidelines in the Director's Stay at Home Order must be followed including:

1. Minimum basic operations
 - a. The business needs to do the minimum necessary activities to maintain the business this includes facilitating the necessary activities to allow employees to work from home.
2. Social Distancing Requirements
 - a. The business must be able to maintain a six foot social distancing from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible, or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into sleeve or elbow) regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands. Must also include designating 6-foot distances, having separate operating hours for vulnerable populations, and have online or remote access.
3. Business and employers must also
 - a. Allow as many employees to work from home as possible, actively encourage sick employees to stay home (must be fever free for 72 hours without the use of medication) and symptoms have improved, ensure sick leave policies are up to date, flexible and non-punitive. Separate employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms from other employees. Reinforce Key Messages to stay at home when sick, use cough and sneeze etiquette, and practice hand hygiene. Must provide soap and water, hand sanitizer, tissues and no-touch receptacles.

Frequently perform enhanced cleaning of all commonly touched surfaces including workspaces and equipment. Must be prepared to change business practices if needed.

These are complex times and there is no one answer to most questions. The Governor and Director of Health want to promote and protect the health of Ohioans. The Governor's and Director's Orders establish the spirit and parameters of Ohio's response.

The local health district has the authority to establish rules and enforce rules from the state health department as fits their local jurisdiction. This means that jurisdictions can make certain decisions about how to deliver services in a way that best meets their community's needs.

The Stay at Home order gave local health departments the authority 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. All business should cease to operate unless they are critical or essential. If the essential business cannot follow the above guidelines, which are numbers 13, 15 and 18 of the Director's Order the business should not be operating.

The Board of Health has no legal or constitutional authority to shut down churches and congregations that choose to ignore common sense and decency, while putting their own congregations in extreme jeopardy. The Butler County Board of Health sent a letter on March 24, 2020 and had a previous conversation with Solid Rock Church encouraging them to discontinue in person services. If you have concerns about Solid Rock Church remaining open please direct your concerns to the leadership of the church.

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