

# Updates to Ontario's COVID-19 response plan

## Re-tooling Ontario manufacturers to produce essential supplies

The Ontario government launched a \$50-million “Ontario Together Fund” to help support businesses in the development of essential equipment and supplies for COVID-19 response. The fund is designed for businesses and individuals that can quickly begin the work of re-tooling their operations or building capacity in order to manufacture medical products, including ventilators, swabs, masks, gloves and eye protection, among other things. The U.S. invoked the *Defense Production Act* to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to require General Motors to manufacture ventilators, however, the Ontario government is attempting to incentivize individuals and businesses to apply through the Ontario Together portal for funding to help them assist the country by re-tooling and producing essential supplies and equipment.

## City of Toronto imposes social distancing fines

On April 2, 2020, the City of Toronto passed By-law 20/322, effective immediately, to amend Chapters 608 and 636 of the Municipal Code to impose emergency physical distancing regulations with respect to parks and public squares. The new by-law was issued under the City of Toronto's emergency declaration mandating people who do not live together to keep a 2-metre distance between them in all city parks and public squares. Fines for non-compliance can be up to \$5,000. The by-law is in effect for at least 30 days.

## Construction work and adjusted listing of “essential” industries in Ontario

On April 3, 2020, the Ontario government extended business closures to stop the spread of COVID-19. Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government reduced the list of businesses which it had previously classified as essential and ordered more workplaces to close.

The government ordered all businesses not covered by the updated Emergency Order to close effective Saturday, April 4, 2020 at 11:59 p.m. This closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension as the situation evolves.

Teleworking, online commerce and other innovative ways of working remotely are permitted at all times and are strongly encouraged for all businesses. All supply chains necessary for the production of vital food and healthcare supplies are being protected and remain intact.

For the construction industry in Toronto, following closure of several sites this past week, the list of what now constitutes “essential” construction work has been limited to cover mainly ongoing residential projects and construction related to health care and infrastructure. This move brings Ontario closer to the restrictions now in place in New York, whereby only emergency and infrastructure construction work is permitted to continue.

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