



COVID-19 UPDATES

Updates from Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Message for the Executive Board.

What can we say? There are many things that you can control but this is not one of them. Changes are being made on what seems like an hourly basis. Members should prioritize their own personal safety and that of their employees. After that you must ensure the survival of your business. Figure out what you need to survive for the next month or two and make any changes necessary. There are supposed to be government programs available for businesses and money for our employees. There may also be government mandated requirements for you to compensate employees. Until any bill is passed, it is not a law, and everything is just speculation. No one wants to have to lay off employees or cancel programs but nothing should be off the table at this time. If you have to make changes, we hope that you make them properly.

Unless you are going to pack it in; one investment that you can't afford to be without is your MPC membership. The people that are bringing you all of this up to the minute information are in the same boat as you are. Last week they were worried about how they would handle all of the work that was coming. Amazing how things can change so quickly. When this is over there will be a huge demand for work. You may not have all of your men, but hopefully you will have some money left. Your customers who are now locking you out will want you back at a cheaper price and much longer payment schedule. It's just the way things work. We understand what you are going through because we are living it with you. Please stay safe and we will do our best to help you get through this.

As the bills are passed and become law, MPC Executive Director, John DeLillo, will provide a brief summary of what exactly they mean. However, as the leader of your business only you can decide what actions you should take. While we can't have a meeting for a while we can still communicate. If you have a question or need to talk reach out through our committee emails and we will do our best to help you.

NYS Businesses to Limit Their Workforce To 50%

Please be advised that Governor Cuomo just announced that he is signing an Executive Order that "no business can have more than 50% of their workforce report to work outside of the home." The Governor said the Order will exempt "essential services" and listed such services as food, pharmacies, healthcare, shipping, supplies, etc.

MPC Comments:

Licensed Master Plumbers and Fire Suppression Contractors provide life safety services. As such, we believe persons performing emergency repair work are exempt from this requirement.



At this time, we cannot say with certainty that non-emergency work would be exempt. Our Lobbyist is checking with his Albany counterpart to get an official determination. We will provide an update as soon as it is available.

Con Edison Energy Services Update

Con Edison Energy Services will continue working emergent and critical jobs while throttling some standard work, to remain in alignment with the Covid19 mitigation efforts.

The Con Edison, Energy Services group, is reviewing requests for field visit and inspection appointments on a case by case basis, our goal is to limit customer and employee exposure. Con Edison is following guidelines from the CDC, state, and local government agencies.

As a further precaution, any employees performing field work will ask a few simple questions of the building owner or occupant if it is necessary to enter a customer's premises. We will be asking our customers' cooperation to limit the time or extent of interactions with our employees during appointments and to give our utility professionals distance while they are providing our critical services on job sites in the community.

MPC Email to Con Edison Regarding Emergency Gas Restoration:

Today the MPC Utility Committee sent an email (found below) to Con Edison regarding emergency restoration of gas service during the crisis.

Good Afternoon,

In the past several days, the DOB has sent out Service Notices stating that there may be reduced service levels during the Coronavirus crisis.

Part of the Service Notices detail what will be done in the event that permits cannot be obtained online. There is a possibility that a licensed Master Plumber may not be able to obtain an EWN and a permit or conduct an inspection due to system or personnel issues. We contacted the DOB to ask for guidance on how to expedite the permitting process.

As of today, most of the restaurants are closed and many New York City residents are sheltered in place. It is essential that in addition to heat and hot water, they also have the ability to maintain a continuous supply of cooking gas. In addition to the health aspects of this crisis, there are very real economic hardships that residents have to deal with.

The purpose of this email is to respectfully request that Con Edison, if you haven't done so already, formulates a plan for emergency gas restoration that can be distributed to the industry. In addition, we



would like to take the opportunity to make you aware that there are over 1,600 DOT Task 86/87 Operator Qualified persons that are available to assist Con Edison if the need arises.

Licensed Master Plumbers and qualified utility operators have a long history of working together to provide a safe and reliable gas supply to the residents of NYC. The NYC Administrative Code section 28-105.4.3.2 provides that a licensed Master Plumber working with the utility may do emergency repairs on gas distribution piping without a permit, providing a report is filed upon completion of the work. In light of the current crisis, the MPC is concerned that licensed Master Plumbers will maintain the ability to immediately restore gas service to a building.

The public perception today is that once the gas is shutdown, it takes longer than they anticipated to get it turned back on. We do not want people hesitating to notify the proper authorities because they don't want their gas shutoff. In the interest of maintaining the highest level of public safety, we respectfully request that for the duration of the crisis, the utility honors the Code and works with the licensed plumbing community to provide immediate gas restoration when the repairs are completed and the utilities qualified operators have determined that it is safe to restore gas to a building.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Regards,

John F. DeLillo, Jr.
Executive Director
The Master Plumbers Council of the City of New York

NYC Buildings Service Notice COVID-19 Response: Administrative Enforcement (AEU) and Licensing Units Updates

As part of the citywide response to the Coronavirus, Department of Buildings (DOB) customers are strongly encouraged to immediately limit the amount of walk-in traffic to DOB offices. Effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020 the following changes are mandatory:

Certificates of Correction

Continue to submit documents by mail or hand delivery to:

Administrative Enforcement Unit
280 Broadway, 1st Floor
New York, NY 10007

[Click here to continue reading the service notice.](#)



MPC Comments:

Licensed Master Plumbers and Fire Suppression Contractors provide life safety services. Some of the proposed requirements to conduct all license renewals via snail mail can effectively shut down a business. The MPC is preparing a response that will be emailed to the DOB tomorrow.

DEP Local Offices

Please note that effective Wednesday, March 18, 2020 the NYC Local Records Offices for permits will limit interaction with the public until further notice and implement the following mandatory procedures due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 EMERGENCY Declaration:

- No walk-in services will be provided to customers at the Local Office
 - All applications for water and sewer connection permits must be submitted online via the Water & Sewer Permitting System.
 - The Queens Borough Office at Lefrak City will be open to the public to allow the walk-in of plumbers who require permits for emergency purposes only.
 - Appointments for emergency purposes can be made with Ambica 718- 595-5762 and Sursati Harilall at 718- 595-4238.
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Workers' Comp Hearings Now Remote, Board Offices Closed to the Public

Updated 3/16/2020

To preserve public and workforce safety, effective immediately, the Board will conduct workers' compensation hearings remotely, using the Board's Virtual Hearings service. Virtual Hearings allow injured workers, attorneys/representatives, witnesses and other participants to attend workers' compensation hearings remotely using a computer or mobile device. For the very small number of hearings that are not held using Virtual Hearings (discrimination cases under WCL § 120), the Board will contact the participants regarding further proceedings.

Please visit the Board's Virtual Hearings webpage at <http://www.wcb.ny.gov/virtual-hearings/> for complete details on how to attend a hearing using virtual hearings.

Injured workers can also choose to appear by phone by calling (844) 337-6301. If you are an unrepresented injured worker and are unable to participate in your hearing, it will be rescheduled.

Board Locations Closed

Following a mandate by Governor Cuomo, all Board locations are temporarily closed to the public starting Tuesday, March 17, however the Board will strive to continue operations remotely.



Additional Guidance

The Board issued additional guidance related to COVID-19 to assist Board stakeholders: [NYS WCB Response to the Novel Coronavirus, COVID-19.](#)

If you have any questions, please contact the WCB Customer Service Toll-Free Number (877) 632-4996. You can also [sign-up to receive WCB notifications.](#)

Lawsuits Against Businesses Over Coronavirus Have Begun. More to Come?

Bob Van Voris, Edvard Pettersson, Chris Dolmetsch and Hugo Miller of the Insurance Journal write "The coronavirus has upended markets, disrupted supply chains and forced quarantines. It's all fertile ground for lawsuits. Hospitals, restaurants, day care centers, nursing homes and hotels may face claims that they didn't take adequate steps to protect people. Shareholders can sue if companies fail to act effectively in response to the epidemic.

Businesses are scrambling to see if their insurance policies cover disruptions caused by the virus. Governments are reviewing their quarantine powers.

'The impact on the global supply chain, I think, is going to be dramatic,' said Paul White, a partner with Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker who represents insurers."

[Click here to continue reading article.](#)

Updates from Tuesday, March 17, 2020

NYC Buildings Service Notice COVID-19 Response – Application Processing

As part of the citywide response to the Coronavirus, Department of Buildings (DOB) customers are being encouraged to immediately limit the amount of walk-in traffic to DOB offices. Effective Wednesday, March 18, customers are strongly encouraged to make use of the following methods:

- Continue to use eFiling for Hub Development, Full, Self-Service jobs and AHV permits
- Continue to use DOB NOW: Build for all applicable work types.
- The Administrative Enforcement Unit, Licensing and Enforcement units are currently maintaining their normal functionality. Additional Service Notices will be posted this week with updates on these transactions.
- Customer Service Night is cancelled on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and until further notice.



Transactions conducted at a DOB borough office that are not listed, will continue to take place in-person, including Records Room requests and other functions that require a service ticket.

[Click here to continue reading the service notice.](#)

MPC COMMENTS:

The MPC will be reaching out to the DOB today to follow-up on these announcements. We want to ensure that licensed plumbers can continue to work and resolve any emergencies.

Remember that the Code provides that you can conduct any emergency work and submit a Permit application within 2 business days from commencement. You may also take advantage of the EWN process for any emergency repairs.

Please note that the requirement to submit a permit within 2 business days has not been waived. The Code requires submission of an application. In buildings where there are outstanding violations the permit may be held up in the system.

The MPC will seek a more expedited process to resolve L2 waivers and allow a permit to go through. We will update the industry as more information becomes available. We understand that the DOB may be issuing another notice later today. We will make that information available as soon as we receive it. We anticipate that service levels will extend as this crisis continues.

We realize that many of your jobs may be shut down. NYS has announced that they will be waiving the 7-day waiting period for people who are out of work due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) closures or quarantines. For more information go to:

<https://www.labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>

The DOB held a meeting today with the new construction industry. As of TODAY, there are no plans to shut down construction sites. There is a possibility that this may happen, so members should plan accordingly.

Here is what NYC Department of Small Business Services has offered:

Starting later [today](#), small businesses will be able to apply online for an employee retention grant. The NYC Department of Small Business Services is also working as quickly as possible to setup the zero-interest loan program, and will be sharing more information on that in the days ahead. Eligibility criteria for both programs are included below. Click [here](#) to learn more about these programs.

NYC Small Business Continuity Fund

This link will go live by the end of the week. Clients can fill out an interest form to receive a notification when the application opens. Click [here](#) to retrieve the interest form.

Businesses with fewer than 100 employees who have seen sales decreases of 25% or more will be eligible for zero interest loans of up to \$75,000 to help mitigate losses in profit.



Eligibility Criteria for the NYC Small Business Continuity Fund

- Businesses must
- Be located within the five boroughs of New York City
- Demonstrate that the COVID-19 outbreak caused at least a 25% decrease in revenue
- Employ 99 employees or fewer in total across all locations
- Demonstrate ability to repay the loan
- Have no outstanding tax liens or legal judgements

Please visit www.nyc.gov/covid19biz for best business practices and updates regarding financial assistance.

SBA To Provide Small Businesses Impacted by Coronavirus (COVID-19) Up to \$2 Million in Disaster Assistance Loans

SBA Administrator [Jovita Carranza](#) issued the following statement today in response to the President's address to the nation:

"The President took bold, decisive action to make our 30 million small businesses more resilient to Coronavirus-related economic disruptions. Small businesses are vital economic engines in every community and state, and they have helped make our economy the strongest in the world. Our Agency will work directly with state Governors to provide targeted, low-interest disaster recovery loans to small businesses that have been severely impacted by the situation. Additionally, the SBA continues to assist small businesses with counseling and navigating their own preparedness plans through our network of 68 District Offices and numerous Resource Partners located around the country. The SBA will continue to provide every small business with the most effective and customer-focused response possible during these times of uncertainty."

Process for Accessing SBA's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Disaster Relief Lending

- The S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Upon a request received from a state's or territory's Governor, SBA will issue under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.
- Any such Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the state's or territory's Governor to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance. Once a declaration is made for designated areas within a state, the information on the application process for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance will be made available to all affected communities.



- SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.
- These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.
- SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the expanded focus of the federal government's coordinated response, and the SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible.