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Governor Cuomo Orders All Non-Essential Workers to Work from Home

March 21, 2020

On Friday, March 20, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo, announced that 100% of non-essential workers are required to work from home, calling it the “most drastic measure we can take.” This is a change from the two previous orders, which called for 50% and 75%, respectively, of workers to stay home. "We are going to close the valve. New York State is on PAUSE (Policies that Assure Safety for Everyone)," Cuomo said. Governor Cuomo acknowledged that this would likely result in many businesses having to close. However, the executive order will not apply to those who work in essential services, including but not limited to utilities, financial institutions, grocery stores, and pharmacies. The Empire State Development Corporation has issued guidance on what “essential businesses” are. That guidance can be found at https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026.

This order comes as the number of New Yorkers infected with COVID-19 surpassed the 7,100 mark. The actual number is likely much higher given that many people have not yet been tested. The order’s purpose is to slow the spread of the virus, while attempting to lighten the stress on New York’s medical infrastructure.

Governor Cuomo also asked New Yorkers to remain at home “to the greatest extent possible” and banned all non-essential gatherings of any size. He also mandated that all people should stay at least six feet away from other people when they are out in public (while engaging in solitary activities like running or walking).

The order is set to go into effect on Sunday night and Governor Cuomo noted that businesses will be fined for non-compliance, but that individuals would not be sanctioned.

We will continue to update this as more information becomes available. In the meantime, if you have questions regarding any aspects of employment law and any implications the COVID-19 virus has caused or will cause to your place of business, feel free to contact Thomas B. Wassel at (516) 357-3868 or via email at **twassel@cullenllp.com**, James G. Ryan at (516) 357-3750 or via email at **jryan@cullenllp.com**, or Hayley B. Dryer at (516) 357-3745 or via email at **hdryer@cullenllp.com**.

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