March 24, 2020

To: PMA Massachusetts Members

On Monday, March 23, 2020, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker issued an emergency order to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by requiring all businesses that do not provide “COVID-19 Essential Services” to close their physical workplaces and facilities. The order also prohibits indoor or confined outdoor gatherings of more than 10 people. The order will take effect on Tuesday, March 24 at 12:00 p.m. and is set to last through 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2020.

This follows similar action taken by numerous other states such as California, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Under the order, businesses designated as “COVID-19 Essential Workforces” may continue operations, but must do so with allowances for social-distancing protocols.

The state provides a list of businesses designated as “COVID-19 Essential Services.” The list is based on PMA-supported federal guidance; however, it has been amended to reflect the needs of Massachusetts’ unique economy. The list includes in its definition Critical Manufacturing and Defense Industrial Base sectors. Critical Manufacturing is defined as “necessary for the manufacturing of materials and products needed for medical supply chains, transportation, energy, communications, food and agriculture, chemical manufacturing, nuclear facilities, the operation of dams, water and wastewater treatment, emergency services, and the defense industrial base” (Page 8), while the Defense Industrial Base sector includes “workers who support the essential services required to meet national security commitments to the federal government and U.S. Military,” including “manufacturing/production workers” and “personnel working for companies, and their subcontractors, who perform under contract to the Department of Defense providing materials and services to the Department of Defense” (Page 9).

If you believe that your business is essential or is providing essential services and/functions and you are not included in the list of “COVID-19 Essential Services,” you may request designation as an essential business by filling out an application. Amendments and updates to the list of “COVID-19 Essential Services” will be published as necessary with the changing conditions in the state.

Massachusetts has provided an online portal containing resources and guidance to help the business community navigate the outbreak of COVID-19. The state has also been approved by the Small Business Administration (SBA) for companies seeking disaster loans for up to $2 million.

In Washington, D.C., our lobbyists indicate that the U.S. Senate is hoping to vote on a final package in the coming days, though a U.S. Senator has now tested positive for COVID-19 with several others under self-quarantine.
The measure on which PMA is lobbying could include $350 billion for small businesses, those defined as having fewer than 500 employees. This proposal includes allowing eligible companies to receive zero interest "business interruption loans" to pay employees, rent or mortgages that are backed by the SBA, with loan forgiveness contingent on keeping workers on the payroll. The draft bill also includes an expansion of Net Operating Loss and several other provisions requested by the association.

Following conversations with members and a survey of companies last week, our advocacy team in Washington, D.C. submitted to the White House and Congress a list of 10 recommendations to support manufacturers during the COVID-19 economic recovery process, several of which are included in the pending measure. The recommendations include solutions to help with cash flow, prompt payment terms to suppliers for companies receiving federal funds, ensuring banks do not revoke existing lines of credit, and making sure manufacturers have the resources to continue operations and quickly ramp up production after the crisis wanes.

The situation is very fluid and, while PMA is a national organization, we are mobilizing all of our resources to assist our members throughout the country. Working with our advocacy team in Washington, D.C., we have created www.onevoiceinfo.org as a one-stop resource for members to find links to the latest OSHA, CDC and local government resources, including workplace safety posters to print.

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time with questions.