April 16, 2020

To: PMA Rhode Island Members

On April 14, 2020, Governor Gina Raimondo issued an executive order requiring all manufacturing employees in Rhode Island to wear a mask during their time at work unless they can “easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other employees.” The order takes effect on Saturday, April 18, 2020 and remains in effect until Monday, May 18, 2020.

Under the order it is mandatory for employees to wear cloth face covers at manufacturing businesses along with customer-facing and office-based businesses, non-profit organizations, construction, food service industry and all other businesses continuing in-person operations, unless granted an exemption by the state. Businesses are required to provide employees, at their own expense, with either the face covering or the materials to create a face covering. While employees who can maintain a social distance of 6 feet are not required to continuously wear a mask while working, masks still must be worn while in common areas of the workplace, such as entrances and exits, hallways and corridors, restrooms, breakrooms, time clock areas, elevators and stairways.

Manufacturing businesses may allow their employees to not wear a face covering when doing so would negatively impact the safety of the worker such as while working from ladders, when other respiratory protection is required as part of their job function, or when operating heavy machinery and the mask impairs hearing and communication.

For information on purchasing or making face coverings for employees contact the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.

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