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CITY, CORONAVIRUS, NEWS

Baker orders non-essential businesses to close, advises residents stay home

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by [Angela Yang](#)

Gov. Charlie Baker issued a statewide order Monday morning to close all physical locations of non-essential businesses, effective noon Tuesday through noon April 7.

Businesses must work from home unless they provide essential services. Grocery stores, pharmacies and banks are among those that will remain open, Baker said in a press conference.

“We will not stop anyone from accessing these essential businesses,” Baker said.

Baker said although he realizes smaller, locally-owned businesses are least likely to have the resources to work remotely, he believes taking on the challenge head-on will alleviate tougher times ahead.

“A concerted effort now will help us get back to work and back to school,” Baker said. “And we all have a role to play in this fight.”

Baker also directed the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to release a stay-at-home advisory urging residents to refrain from heading outdoors for non-essential activities while practicing social distancing until April 7. Going outside, however, is not prohibited.

“There’s been a lot of talk about our government mandating people [take] shelter in their homes,” Baker said. “I do not believe I can or should order U.S. citizens to be confined to their homes for days on end. It doesn’t make sense from a public

health point of view, and it's not realistic.”

People can still venture outside to take a walk, for example, but residents should not be in close contact with others.

“We're advising people to use common sense and consider how they can avoid unnecessary close contact with one another,” Baker said. “Every step we all take to cut down on the chances this thing has to spread is a way to help our communities get through it.”

The number of coronavirus cases in Massachusetts is 646 as of Monday morning, as reported by the City. The death toll hit five Sunday — including one in Boston — two days after the first death was reported in the state.



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