

FAQs on Governor Walz's Stay-at-Home Executive Orders

GENERAL

Q: Can all dealership employees keep coming to work since motor vehicle repairs and sales by appointment are allowed?

A: No. The original Stay-at-Home order explicitly provided the critical services exemption for sales and services employees whose work duties cannot be performed at their homes or residence. The [latest](#) is expanded to include office staff who cannot perform their work remotely. Only those that need to physically be at the dealership to do repairs, sales or office work and must be onsite to support those functions should come to work.

Employees who don't perform sales or service and can do their job remotely should continue to telecommute.

Q: Do we need to give our employees letters stating that they are considered "essential?"

A: No, the "essential" designation is more about what people are doing (i.e.: getting groceries, working in a hospital...) rather than what their specific job is. While Governor Walz is encouraging people to stay home, he also has publicly stated that no one needs to carry papers with them proving their employment.

WITH REGARD TO THE SALES LANGUAGE ITSELF:

Q: The sales restriction says I can only sell to customers who need "essential travel." What does that mean?

A: In Executive Order 20-20, essential travel is defined as "travel to exempted activities and travel to return to a home or place of residence." This encompasses everything from running to the grocery store to going to the pharmacy to commuting to jobs deemed critical. This also includes travel into and out of Minnesota. Since it's defined so broadly, we don't think dealers need to do anything extra to verify that a customer's travel is essential.

Q: What are the CDC and MDH guidelines referred to in the order?

A: The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) points to the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to COVID-19](#) This site includes recommendations to:

- reduce transmissions by employees;
- maintain a healthy work environment;
- conduct routine environmental cleaning; and
- best-practices for social distancing.

Q: The language in the executive order refers to "automobile sales." Are medium- and heavy-duty truck and RV sales covered?

A: Since truck sales are necessary to fulfill "necessary supplies and services" which is a permissible exemption under the Executive Order, a fair reading of the intent of the executive order would extend it to truck sales.

On March 29, the Walz Administration updated its [guidance](#) to specify that RV sales may also be conducted by appointment when CDC and MDH guidelines, including social distancing, can be met.

Q: What does by appointment mean?

A: Customers need to make appointments in advance. As far as what an “appointment” looks like, and how much lead-time you need to constitute an appointment, there is not a one-size-fits-all approach on the matter, and it will likely vary based on risk-tolerance.

Q: How should I staff my sales floor?

A: Since onsite staff should be limited to those necessary to handle appointments and conduct the portions of the transaction that need to be done in person, a best practice we are seeing is to stagger schedules so that dealerships can adhere to social distancing and crowd limitations while still staffing the business needs of the store. Longer hour shifts with fewer people in the dealership at one time or scheduling a few days on – few days off, seem to be the trend.

OTHER DEALERSHIP FUNCTIONS:

Q: Are parts and parts wholesaling and warehousing considered essential?

A: Yes, our reading of the order is that parts are considered an essential business enterprise.

Q: Can our body shop stay open?

A: Yes. Automotive repair and maintenance facilities and the employees who repair and maintain vehicles are covered.

Q: Is my car wash considered essential?

A: Car washes are not considered essential, but under the latest [Executive Order \(20-48\)](#), they may be open as long as the car washes are limited to exterior washes, allow for payment without direct contact between workers and customers, and where customers remain in their vehicles.

Q: Can I rent cars to customers?

A: Minnesota has updated its guidance and has confirmed that vehicle rentals are considered a critical service and may continue.

Q: How does this affect advertising?

A: The BBB Ad Standards are still in effect. In addition, while you are still open for service business, you should not lead the customers to believe that it is business as usual in the sales operation. Sales should be conducted by appointment only and your advertising should reflect that statement.