

*News Release*

## **Ontario Closing At-Risk Workplaces to Protect Health and Safety**

March 23, 2020

### **Business-owners Encouraged to Continue their Operations Through Work-From-Home Policies and Innovative Business Models**

TORONTO — Due to the evolving COVID-19 situation, the Ontario government will be ordering at-risk workplaces to close-down, while encouraging businesses to explore opportunities to continue operations through work-from-home and innovative business models. At the same time, the government reminds businesses to put in place protocols for physical distancing and regular hand-washing in order to protect the health and safety of employees and the general public.

Earlier today, Premier Doug Ford was joined by Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance and Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General to announce that the government will be closing at-risk workplaces to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Essential businesses include, but are not limited to grocery stores and pharmacies, telecommunications and IT infrastructure service providers, and businesses that support power generation, natural gas distribution and clean drinking water. Essential businesses are being asked to put into place any and all measures to safeguard the wellbeing of their employees on the front-lines.

Teleworking and online commerce are permitted at all times for all businesses.

"While this was a difficult decision, we trust that Ontario's business leaders will be able to promote safety while carrying out business and protecting jobs," said Premier Doug Ford. "The grocery store clerks, transit and hydro workers and truckers are out there on the front lines making sure the people of Ontario continue to have access to the products and services they need. It is essential that their workplaces be kept as safe as possible so these local heroes can return home to their families worry free."

At-risk workplaces will be ordered to close by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24th and where possible, take the necessary measures so staff can work from home allowing operations to continue.

"Our government applauds the sacrifice and hard work of all Ontario workers and businesses, and will stand by them through this crisis," said Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. "We call on workplaces that remain open to be vigilant and to enforce the highest possible standards of cleanliness and caution as we continue the fight together against COVID-19." Essential

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