



# Agriculture and Markets

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Commissioner

## Interim Guidance for Horticulture

March 24, 2020

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*This guidance is provided for greenhouse operations, landscapers, arborists, garden centers, and nurseries.*

### **Background:**

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed the "[PAUSE](#)" Executive Order, a 10-point policy to assure uniform safety for everyone. It includes a new directive that all non-essential businesses statewide must close in-office personnel functions effective at 8PM on Sunday, March 22, 2020. Essential businesses are exempt from this guidance. Horticulture operations as defined below have been deemed essential and are exempt.

### **Horticultural Operations:**

For purposes of Executive Order 202.6/PAUSE Executive Order, "Essential Business" states "agriculture/farms," which includes the horticulture industry. As outlined in Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25-AA Section 301, horticulture is a key component of agriculture and New York State farms.

For horticultural operations, the Department defines the following businesses/activities as consistent with Executive Order 202.6:

- Production, movement, maintenance, and sale of vegetable plants, nursery stock, trees, plants, and flowers at greenhouse and nursery operations.
- Tree and shrub trimming and removal for disease, safety, and public health purposes.
- The placement and ground maintenance of sod, landscaping plants, flowers, ornamentals, and trees on residential and commercial grounds.
- Transportation necessary to meet any of the above functions.
- Agribusiness, including the sale and application of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and minerals, that support any of the above functions.

If a business does not fall within this guidance, but you believe that it is essential or it is an entity providing essential services or functions, you may request designation as an essential business. [Request designation as an essential business.](#)

## **FOR EMPLOYEES**

### **Cleaning/Disinfecting and Social Distancing:**

All privately-owned facilities must practice social distancing, and proper cleaning and sanitizing of the facility. This includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done:
  - Before and after eating.
  - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
  - After touching face, hair, cellphone, and/or clothing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before handling food.
  - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
  - After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

It is encouraged that businesses post [signage](#) with handwashing procedures in prominent locations to promote hand hygiene. Clean and disinfect buildings and equipment as outlined in this [guidance](#).

**For additional information, visit the links below:**

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus>

NYS Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

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