



Division of Food and Recreational Safety

March 23, 2020

Guidance for Operating Beer, Food Plants

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) wants to provide additional information related to Gov. Tony Evers' [emergency order](#) prohibiting mass gatherings of 10 people or more. This order contains an exemption for manufacturing, processing, distribution and production facilities.

We have received numerous questions about how this order applies to food processing plants. One common question: **Are food and beer plants considered essential services? I am concerned that operations are continuing without social distancing.**

Here is some guidance and clarification:

- Licensed food processing plants including, but not limited to, beer plants are considered essential services. This designation is supported by guidance from the federal [Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#).
- Your personal safety and efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 are important. Emergency Order No. 5 states that manufacturing, processing, distribution and production facilities are exempt from the requirement that gatherings must preserve social distancing of 6 feet between people. However, following Wisconsin Department of Health Services

(DHS) recommendations, it's suggested that you do whatever you can to practice social distancing and maintain good hygiene. [Learn why it's important.](#)

This order remains in effect for the duration of the public health emergency declared in executive Order No. 72, or until a superseding order is issued.

We will be using GovDelivery to send critical information to the manufactured food industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. If you know others within your organization who would benefit from these updates, please forward the signup link:

- [Food Processing Plant and Warehouse Operators](#)

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) offers answers to common questions, and the State of Wisconsin [created a webpage](#) with other valuable resources. Here are a few additional links and resources that might be helpful during this challenging time:

- [COVID-19 Information](#)
- [COVID-19 Facts: Protect Your Family](#)

So we can provide a consistent response to COVID-19 concerns, please direct questions to datcpfoodcomplaintsemergencyresponse@wisconsin.gov or call (608) 224-4683.

