



ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

Interim Guidance for Horticulture

May 15, 2020

This guidance is provided for greenhouse operations, nurseries, sod farms, arborists and landscapers.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced the “PAUSE” Executive Order, a 10-point policy to assure uniform safety in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. It included a directive that all non-essential businesses statewide close in-office personnel functions beginning 8:00 PM on Sunday, March 22, 2020. Essential businesses were exempt from closure pursuant to Executive Order 202.6.

A phased re-opening of low risk, non-essential businesses began on May 15, 2020. Due to their open space or outdoor nature, the horticultural and landscaping industries have been determined as permissible consistent with the outlined requirements. These industries must adhere to all social distancing, cleaning, and sanitation guidelines.

Horticultural Operations

For purposes of this guidance, horticultural activities include the production, movement, maintenance and sale of vegetable plants, nursery stock, trees, sod, plants and flowers at greenhouse and nursery operations and sod farms, and the agribusinesses (i.e. pest, weed, water and nutrient management) that support their operation.

Required Operating Procedures

- Maintain a social distancing of at least six feet between individuals. No areas of mass gatherings. Sales to be conducted outdoors must adhere to strict social distancing of six feet between customers and employees. Do not permit customers to spend an excessive amount of time near tables or plant displays.
- Consider other approaches to facilitate the direct sale of horticultural products to help reduce density of customers and the handling of cash or other currencies. Alternative options may include online ordering, or other creative purchasing solutions, with pick up at the greenhouse/nursery parking area.
- Frequently clean and sanitize surfaces and other frequently touched points of contact, including door handles and point of sale machines, common areas in buildings, and shared equipment.
- Hand sanitizer, consisting of at least 60% alcohol, should be made available to customers.
- Anyone who is over the age of two and who able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public in accordance with Executive Orders 202.17 and 202.18. Additional information is available at [Interim Guidance on Executive Orders 202.17 and 202.18](#).

- Employers must also provide essential workers with masks free of charge to wear when interacting with the public in accordance with Executive Order 202.16. Additional information is available at [Interim Guidance on Executive Order 202.16](#).

Landscaping Operations

For purposes of this guidance, landscaping activities consist of the care and planting of grasses, sod, plants, shrubs, and trees and the mulching, trimming, and removal of these items for disease, safety, and public health purposes. Transportation of equipment and materials necessary to meet any of the above functions and irrigation to maintain plant health is permissible.

Required Operating Procedures

- Sales and viewing of materials are conducted outdoors.
- Strict social distancing of six feet must be maintained.
- Installations must be made by appointment only with minimal customer interaction.
- Clean and disinfect trucks, vehicles, and equipment after each use.
 - Anyone who is over age two and able to medically tolerate a face-covering must cover their nose and mouth with a mask or cloth face-covering when in a public in accordance with Executive Orders 202.17 and 202.18.
- Employers must also provide essential workers with masks free of charge to wear when interacting with the public in accordance with Executive Order 202.16.

All businesses must:

Post Stop the Spread [signage](#) (alternative languages for the [signage](#) are also available) and follow the hand washing/hygiene protocol:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20:
 - Before and after eating.
 - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before handling food.
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated, including face, hair, cellphone, or clothing.
 - After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- If soap and water is unavailable, using an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use in a trash receptacle.

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>