



Disaster Preparedness Commission (DPC) Determination of Essential Workers

The Disaster Preparedness Commission has determined the following categories of workers may be deemed essential personnel when directed by their employers to assist in providing emergency services in a declared disaster area¹. Travel ban exemptions, as appropriate, must be made by state or local officials based on the following:

- (1) The nature of the event;
- (2) The actual or expected road conditions;
- (3) The potential or expected duration of the event;
- (4) The type of emergency services necessary to respond to the declared disaster; and
- (5) Any other needs unique to the event.

This determination by the DPC is not a blanket waiver for essential personnel to travel in contravention of a State or local road closure.

Safety and Security

- **Law Enforcement/Security/Fire Service/Search and Rescue**
 - Various personnel, encompassing public, private, and volunteer sectors (front-line and management, civilian and sworn), integral to emergency management, law enforcement, fire and rescue, EMS, security, hazardous material response, air medical services, corrections, search and rescue, and fusion centers.
 - Workers and contracted vendors who maintain and provide services and supplies to public safety facilities, including emergency communication centers, public safety answering points, public safety communications centers, emergency operation centers, fire and emergency medical services stations, healthcare facilities, police and law enforcement stations and facilities, and security staff who maintain building access control and physical security measures.
 - Workers, including contracted vendors, who maintain, manufacture, or supply equipment and services supporting law enforcement, fire, EMS, and response operations (to include electronic security and life safety security personnel).
 - Workers (including contractors and subcontractors) who support the essential services required to meet national security commitments to the federal government and U.S. Military, including, but not limited to, space and aerospace, nuclear, engineering, manufacturing, transportation logistics, IT, intelligence, and sanitation realms, ensuring the functionality and security of crucial facilities.
- **Government Service**
 - Government workers across all levels (federal, state, local, tribal, territorial) ensuring mission essential functions and communication networks. Examples include:
 - Personnel supporting operations for emergency facility availability, transportation, energy, and communications, including road clearing and deicing.
 - Workers of the United States Postal Service and related personnel.
 - Elections personnel, encompassing both public and private sector support.

¹ The [Erie County Guidance On Essential Travel](#) was used as the basis for identifying the appropriate categories of essential personnel. The document is organized by FEMA's Community Lifelines.

- **Community Safety**
 - Workers who support childcare and respond to abuse and neglect of children, spouses, elders, and dependent adults.
 - Workers who support weather disaster and natural hazard mitigation and prevention activities, including disaster liaisons and disaster mental health responders.
 - Veterinary professionals and services supporting service animals, search and rescue dogs, and animals in human care (zoos, aquariums).
 - Service providers ensuring safety, sanitation, and operation of residences, businesses, hospitals, and senior living facilities, including engineers, plumbers, electricians, HVAC technicians, and elevator technicians.
 - Workers supporting the operation, inspection, maintenance, and rehabilitation of essential public works facilities, such as bridges, water, sewer mains, and traffic signals.
 - Personnel managing commercial buildings critical to safety and security, including property managers, building engineers, security staff, fire safety directors, janitorial personnel, and service technicians.
 - Workers facilitating logistics, transportation, and distribution of resources at warehouses to support emergency response.

Food, Hydration, Shelter

- **Food/Hydration/Shelter/Agriculture**
 - Workers who support food, shelter, social services, and other necessities of life for needy groups, individuals, and in-need populations, including traveling medical staff.
 - Workers of firms providing services, supplies, and equipment that enable warehouse and operations, including cooling, storing, packaging, loading and unloading, and distributing products for wholesale or retail sale or use, including cold- and frozen-chain logistics for food and critical biologic products. Including:
 - Workers in agriculture, such as milk haulers, dairy processing personnel, grain truck transporters, and those maintaining service vehicles and facilities for agricultural businesses.
 - Commuters supporting barns, farms, processing facilities, slaughter plants, and animal shelters, alongside retail grocery and foodbank staff, ensuring food supply outlets remain operational.
 - Facility food production staff in correctional institutions.
 - Management and staff at hotels and temporary lodging facilities, including volunteers from organizations like the American Red Cross, assisting in relief operations.
 - Workers handling property management and maintenance, coordinating emergency responses for "at-home" situations, and facilitating deliveries and essential services.

Health and Medical

- **Medical Care**
 - Hospital workers and emergency medical service personnel, including interns and urgent care staff.
 - Pharmacy staff ensuring uninterrupted prescriptions.
 - Workers in inpatient and outpatient settings, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation facilities, hospice facilities, and home care.
 - Providers of dependent care services, workplace safety, and support services.
 - Workers managing telehealth, health plans, administration, security, and billing.
- **Public Health**
 - Government entities and contractors that work in support of local, state, federal, tribal, and territorial public health and medical mission sets.
 - Laboratory personnel and researchers.
 - Environmental health workers focusing on safety and infection control.
 - Community health workers conducting public health functions.
 - Human services providers for at-risk populations, including meal delivery, personal assistance, hospice facilities, and home care services.

- *Patient Movement*
 - Workers required to transport patients to and from medical facilities and appointments.
- *Medical Supply Chain*
 - Workers and volunteers involved in supplying medical necessities such as blood, marrow, stem cells, and plasma, along with workers in medical retail, vendors, suppliers, manufacturers, logistics operators, and distributors of medical products, pharmaceuticals, equipment, and protective gear.
- *Fatality Management*
 - Professionals handling deceased individuals, including funeral, cremation, burial, and cemetery services, as well as those involved in the coordination and management of human remains and personal effects, including certification of death causes and provision of mental health support to affected families and responders.

Energy

- *Power Grid*
 - Workers supporting all types of energy sources and utilities (nuclear, fossil fuels, hydroelectric, renewables) involved in construction, maintenance, monitoring, and ensuring the reliability, safety, and security of the energy system.
 - Workers supporting renewable energy infrastructure (including, but not limited to, wind, solar, biomass, hydrogen, ocean, geothermal, and hydroelectric), utilities, and microgrids.
 - Workers involved in the manufacturing and distribution of equipment, supplies, and parts necessary to maintain production, maintenance, restoration, and service at energy sector facilities across all energy sector segments.
 - Workers at Independent System Operators and Regional Transmission Organizations managing the network.
 - Workers conducting energy trading/marketing functions that cannot be done remotely.
- *Fuel*
 - Workers providing services related to energy sector fuels including, but not limited to, petroleum (crude oil), natural gas, propane, liquefied natural gas (LNG), compressed natural gas (CNG), natural gas liquids (NGL), other liquid fuels, nuclear, and coal) and supporting the mining, processing, manufacturing, construction, logistics, transportation, permitting, operation, maintenance, safety, security, refueling, waste disposal, storage, and monitoring of support for resources.

Communications

- *911 and Dispatch*
 - Workers at emergency communication centers, public safety answering points, and 911 call centers, including dispatchers for police, fire, and EMS services. Personnel involved in providing access to emergency services, including real-time text, text-to-911, and relay services.
 - Dispatchers involved in service repair and restoration for emergency communication systems.
- *Alerts Warnings and Messages*
 - Personnel involved in emergency alert systems (EAS) and wireless emergency alerts (WEA), including broadcasters, satellite radio and television, cable, and wireline video providers.
 - Workers supporting radio, print, internet, and television news and media services, including front-line news reporters, studio technicians, and personnel involved in newsgathering, reporting, meteorology, and news publishing.
 - Personnel supporting communications efforts of public officials.
 - Workers ensuring access to communications platforms for persons with disabilities, including those providing telecommunication relay services, closed captioning for the deaf, video relay services for deaf citizens using American Sign Language, and audio-description for television programming.

- **Infrastructure**
 - Emergency maintenance of communications infrastructure supported by:
 - Technicians, operators, call centers, wireline and wireless providers, cable service providers, satellite operations, Internet Exchange Points, Points of Presence, Network Access Points, manufacturers, and distributors of communications equipment.
 - Government and private sector workers, including contractors, supporting Department of Defense internet and communications facilities.
 - Workers responsible for construction, maintenance, and restoration of infrastructure, including engineers, technicians, and contractors for fiber optic cables, buried conduits, small cells, and other communication-related infrastructure. This includes permitting, construction of new facilities, and deployment of new technology to address congestion or customer usage.
 - Network Operations staff, engineers, technicians, IT managers, security personnel, software and hardware engineers, and database administrators managing network operations and facilities.
 - Central office personnel maintaining and operating central office, data centers, and other network office facilities, including critical support personnel for front-line workers.
- **Finance**
 - Workers needed to process, verify, and record financial transactions, including payment processing, clearing, and settlement.
 - Workers ensuring orderly market operations for continuous financial transactions and services.

Transportation

- **Highway/Roadway/Motor Vehicle**
 - Workers supporting transportation and logistics functions, including private plow operators, bus drivers, towing and recovery services, emergency management staff, roadside assistance workers, intermodal transportation personnel, and infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation, and inspection workers.
 - Workers supporting the operation and maintenance of essential highway infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, tunnels, traffic operations centers, and movable bridge operators. Examples include:
 - NYS Thruway service area staff.
 - Vendors providing salt/deicing products and fuel.
 - Vehicle/fleet repair, maintenance, and transportation equipment manufacturing and distribution facilities.
- **Mass Transit**
 - Workers repairing and maintaining vehicles, aircraft, rail equipment, marine vessels, and infrastructure, enabling cargo and passenger movement.
 - Mass transit workers providing critical services and performing maintenance on infrastructure and equipment.
 - Bus drivers supporting intercity, commuter, charter, and school bus services.
 - Transportation safety inspectors, including hazardous material and accident investigators.
 - Workers supplying equipment and materials for transportation equipment maintenance.
- **Railway**
 - Workers, including police, responsible for operating and dispatching passenger, commuter, and freight trains and maintaining rail infrastructure and equipment.
- **Aviation**
 - Workers who support air transportation for cargo and passengers, including operation distribution, maintenance, and sanitation. This includes air traffic controllers, flight dispatchers, maintenance personnel, ramp workers, fueling agents, flight crews, airport safety inspectors and engineers, airport operations personnel, aviation and aerospace safety workers, security, commercial space personnel, operations personnel, accident investigators, flight instructors, and other on- and off-airport facilities workers.

- *Maritime*
 - Maritime transportation workers, including port authority staff, commercial facility personnel, dredgers, barge crews, security personnel, mariners, ship crew, ship pilots, tugboat operators, and maritime training/education centers.
 - Workers supporting transportation via inland waterways and the inspection and maintenance of navigation aids.
 - Government and private sector workers involved in undersea cable infrastructure and support facilities.

Hazardous Materials

- *Facilities*
 - Workers supporting the operation and maintenance of facilities with high-risk chemicals that cannot be shut down, requiring highly trained personnel, including plant contract inspectors.
 - Workers maintaining digital systems infrastructure for hazardous materials management operations.
- *HAZMAT/ Pollutants/Contaminants*
 - Workers managing hazardous materials for essential activities such as healthcare waste and energy, including nuclear facilities.
 - Transportation workers supporting the movement of chemicals, hazardous materials, and waste for critical infrastructure.
 - Workers involved in hazardous materials response, cleanup, and environmental remediation, focusing on immediate critical needs.

Water Systems

- Workers operating and maintaining drinking water, wastewater, and drainage infrastructure, including:
 - Operational staff at water and sewer authorities and community water systems.
 - Staff at wastewater treatment and collection facilities.
 - Workers repairing conveyances, performing sampling, and monitoring.
 - Staff for water distribution, testing, and laboratory analysis.
 - Technical support for SCADA Control systems.
 - Suppliers and manufacturers of chemicals, equipment, and personal protection gear.
 - Workers maintaining digital systems infrastructure for water operations.