

New Bedford's Mayor Mitchell and Board of Health order strong public health measures to keep workplaces safe

Mayor Jon Mitchell and the Board of Health have acted to ensure the safety of large industrial workplaces in New Bedford, both for essential businesses currently in operation, and those not designated as essential that will return to operations in the coming weeks. The Mayor and Board of Health announced two emergency orders to keep employees safe at their place of work, and to outline reporting requirements of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in industrial facilities requires that each facility enforce social distancing best practices, modify workstations accordingly, perform regular cleaning and disinfection, and designate a health and safety officer for COVID-19.

Facilities will also be required to conduct temperature checks at the start of all production floor workers' shifts, ensure a positive-testing employee not return to work until it is safe, notify the New Bedford Health Department of positives, and ensure any staffing agency with which they work is complying with federal and state law providing sick time to employees. The facilities are also encouraged to conduct hazard assessments and develop preparedness and response plans for the spread of disease, with the input of their employees.

The order outlining reporting of COVID-19 in the workplace requires employees to notify their employer of a positive test or advice to self-quarantine, and requires staffing agencies or contractors to report the same to any workplace in New

Bedford if an employee is not directly employed by the workplace. This order enables the employer to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their facilities.

Violation of the City's orders may result in a \$300 per day fine for each violation.

Mayor Mitchell declared a state of emergency in New Bedford on March 13 due to the COVID-19 outbreak and has acted to enforce social distancing measures, including the closure of personal care businesses and playgrounds, to protect public health during the state of emergency. The Mayor and Board of Health have taken action to protect senior citizens, ensure safety at essential businesses by requiring employees to wear masks or face coverings, and have acted to ensure workplaces uphold stringent safety requirements to protect workers.