



Federal Officials Reach Deal on New Stimulus Package (CARES Act)

Overnight, Senate and House officials have come to a deal on a proposed federal stimulus package in response to COVID-19. The proposed legislation will need to be finalized this week, but details have been made available on the major components of the bill. Portions of the bill are expected to go into effect in April. The tentative stimulus package includes sections:

- Direct, one-time payments of up to \$1200 per individual and \$500 per child, phasing out at higher income levels.
- Expansion of unemployment insurance benefits by extending the length of benefits, including a bonus payment per week to those drawing on UI, and expanding benefits to independent contractors.
- Additional small business loan funding and a new loan program for small businesses that would be partially forgivable for employers that continue to pay workers for the duration of the crisis.
- Funding for assistance to hospitals and larger businesses being impacted by COVID-19 including airlines and others.
- Creation of an employee retention tax credit for companies who retain employees on payroll through the COVID-19 crisis, covering up to 50% of workers' paychecks and deferring payment of the Social Security payroll tax.

Formal Guidance on Emergency FMLA Expansion

The US Dept. of Labor has created a website that details the requirements of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) that included additional provisions for FMLA related to COVID-19. In addition to the information on the website, we have received clarification that employers with fewer than 50 employees will need to apply for an exemption to this rule if following it will jeopardize the viability of the business. The process for submitting those exemptions is being developed. [Click here](#) to view the FFCRA Emergency FMLA guidance. For answers for FAQ on the Emergency FMLA, [click here](#).

New Construction Codes Scheduled for Adoption March 31st

The MN Dept. of Commerce has confirmed that it will continue with plans to adopt revised construction codes for residential, commercial, mechanical, energy, etc. as originally scheduled on March 31, 2020. The Dept. of Commerce stated that the construction industry had been preparing for these revised code adoptions for a significant amount of time and will proceed as originally planned.

No MN Shelter in Place Order

Governor Walz has not yet issued a "shelter in place" order for Minnesota and notes that he is reviewing that decision regularly. Governor Walz has not given any indication of when a shelter in place order would be expected. Wisconsin issued a shelter in place order effective 8:00am today.

Update on Confirmed Cases

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in St. Louis County remained at 2 through March 24, 2020. The Minnesota Department of Health notes that not all cases of COVID-19 are tested, so it is not representative of the total number of people who have or had COVID-19.