



GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE

March 25, 2020

ON CLARIFICATION RELATED TO THE CLOSURE OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY AND MANDATORY CONDITIONS TO MAKE PRODUCTION OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AIMED AT ASSISTING IN THE PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 VIABLE

On March 15, 2020, the Governor of Puerto Rico issued Administrative Bulletin No. OE-2020-023, establishing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Puerto Rico (the "Executive Order"), including, among other measures, the implementation of a curfew applicable to all citizens, starting at 9:00pm on Sunday, March 15, 2020, which will be in force until March 30, 2020, in accordance with the rules established in said Executive Order.

Additionally, all government operations were ordered to cease, except for those related to essential services. All businesses in Puerto Rico were also ordered to shutdown operations at 6:00pm on March 15, 2020 until March 30, 2020, with exception of those dedicated to retail food sale by means of drive-thru, carry-out or delivery, including prepared or wholesale food, pharmaceutical drugs or medical equipment, pharmacies, supermarkets, gas stations, banking or financial institutions, elderly care centers, or those related to the distribution chains of food, medicine, medical items or fuel.

On March 17, 2020, we issued Circular Letter 2020-02 detailing the activities authorized to operate, and a written communication stating that every Textile Industry contractor, supplier or not to the United States Department of Defense (DoD), had to cease operations as established by the Executive Order, without exception.

Given the exponential increase of the COVID-19 spread in different parts of the world, the supplies of certain essential equipment in the health and safety sectors have been affected. Our Textile Industry has the capacity to produce several of those articles that are so necessary for our health workers, as well as for those who work daily to ensure the safety of the citizens of the United States of America. For these purposes, I have been authorized to notify the following:

- Any textile company that manufactures uniforms/components/equipment for the Department of Defense may operate as long as it adjusts its production to manufacture, in addition, personal protective equipment and that - before starting - is inspected by officers of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (PROSHA), before starting operations and certifying that the contingency plan complies with the protocols established in the event of the spread of COVID-19.
- Any textile company that manufactures personal protective equipment (E.g. face masks, caps, lab coats, gloves and any other medical equipment for health protection), may operate, as long as, before beginning, it is inspected by officials of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (PROSHA) and that they certify that their contingency plan complies with the protocols established in the event of the spread of COVID-19.



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Due to the world situation with the spread of COVID-19, the Hon. Wanda Vázquez Garced, signed Administrative Bulletin No. OE- 2020-20 in order to establish a state of emergency for Puerto Rico and the necessary measures to be taken to combat this threat. The Executive Orders issued under the state of emergency that concerns us, constitute the exercise of the power of the state to protect the life, health and safety of its citizens.

For these purposes, it is imperative that government entities operating in the health and safety sectors, as well as medical-hospital entities, have priority in the acquisition of the products described above manufactured in Puerto Rico. Some cities have experience difficulty in acquiring the safety items needed to operate. In Puerto Rico, we have the opportunity to support the work and security of the health personnel, producing these equipments. It is our duty to provide the necessary help to re-establish operations for this purpose. Likewise, we will continue to keep monitor the latest events and expert recommendations, and under the Reorganization Plan 4-1994 of the Department of Economic Development and Commerce, as amended, we will take additional and urgent measures to protect health and safety, and in harmony with the Governor's orders and directives for emergency duration.

Companies authorized to resume operations must adjust their operational plans to protect the health of their employees and respect the protocols required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We express our willingness to serve as a liaison with other government agencies. We are at your service for any additional requests you may have. Our best wishes to all of you and your loved ones.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Laboy Rivera".

Hon. Manuel A. J. Laboy Rivera

Secretary