

## **Government Affairs Update**

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### **LOCAL**

**County Shelter in Place Orders:** In late March, Boulder and Larimer Counties issued Shelter in Place orders for all residents. Local orders that are more restrictive than the State order (see below) supersede the State order.

Association Executives and I fielded many questions from members. The situation was chaotic, needless to say. Boulder and Larimer Counties eventually designated real estate as an essential business. We received questions such as, "Will I be pulled over by law enforcement if I am out conducting business?" or "Is it ok to hold open houses or showings?"

Some members wanted specific guidance on these topics. Rumors flew fast and furiously. By now you will have received information from your associations. I urge you to follow their recommendations. They will keep you informed. *It would be best not to overwhelm government officials with questions during this time;* they have enough to do without answering the same questions over and over again.

While county health departments have not prohibited showings, for example, they asked all of us to follow their recommendations regarding avoiding interactions with non-family members and social distancing. County representatives with whom I spoke voiced reluctance to issue more specific prohibitions related to real estate activities. They were waiting to see if the State would issue additional guidelines or restrictions, which happened on April 9.

**Key Issues Postponed:** Although local governments are meeting virtually, they have postponed controversial issues until this crisis is past. For one thing, they are busy considering emergency issues in their communities. For another, they want to avoid any perception that they are trying to "slide things through" while the public is preoccupied.

### **COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®**

**CAR COVID-19 Portal:** The Colorado Association of REALTORS® has a COVID-19 portal for members. It includes current information, updates and guidance you'll find helpful.

<https://www.coloradorealtors.com/colorado-realtor-coronavirus-information-portal/>

### **STATE**

**State Order:** Governor Polis announced a Shelter in Place order on March 25. The order went into effect on March 26. The order was extended until April 26, but this

will depend on the course of the pandemic, so the date may change. Initially the State order did not designate real estate as an essential business, however, Colorado Association of REALTORS® lobbyists and staff worked quickly to have that order amended.

At that time the State did not issue additional restrictions relevant to our industry, however on April 9 the Division of Real Estate issued guidance with more specific information. Some of the key provisions are listed here:

“Real estate appraisals and closings are considered *critical services* to complete real estate transactions. Further, home inspections and final walkthroughs after a buyer has signed a purchase contract, and is therefore a condition precedent to the actual transfer of property, is also considered to be an essential part of the real estate transaction.

Elements that are fundamental to the real estate transaction are deemed essential to support market activity. *However, showing a property or conducting an open house in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic shall be avoided as it violates the specific mandates of recently issued executive and public health orders.*

Further, encouraging members of the public to engage in non-essential travel and/or requiring residents to leave their residences for the purpose of viewing real property unnecessarily compromises public health by expanding public exposure.”

In addition, the Division has a page related to COVID-19 information. That information is available here - <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dora/covid-19-updates-licensees-and-consumers>. Open House concerns are addressed here - <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/CODORA/bulletins/2832cb0>.

**Unemployment Compensation:** The Colorado Department of Labor and Unemployment is updating its systems to accept claims for workers who are eligible for benefits under the CARES Act, which includes self-employed and independent contractors. The Department will be able to process claims for self-employed workers beginning April 20. Claims can be filed here: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/unemployment>.

## **NATION**

**President Signs CARES Act:** On March 27 Congress passed a 1,000-page, \$2 trillion economic relief package which was signed by the President. It provides mortgage forbearance, a moratorium on eviction filings, Section 8 voucher rental assistance, unemployment benefits for self-employed individuals and independent contractors and more. Note that unemployment benefits will be administered by the State of Colorado.

Read more here: <https://www.nar.realtor/political-advocacy/coronavirus-aid-relief-and-economic-security-act>

Information from NAR: Here's a link to NAR's COVID-19 clearinghouse for members -<https://www.nar.realtor/coronavirus>

**SBA CARES FAQs:** NAR has been working closely with Congress and the Administration to ensure the interests of REALTORS® and their clients are protected in any Federal action in response to COVID-19. Many REALTORS® are small businesses, or work with them as clients. In the most recent relief package passed into law, the "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act" or CARES Act, there were significant provisions aimed at assisting small businesses during this difficult time. The CARES Act appropriates more than \$360 billion total for new Small Business Administration (SBA) programs - the 7(a) Paycheck Protection Program loans and the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) advance grants program.

NAR has created a number of Q&As to address frequent questions about what these programs are, who is eligible and how to apply. These are available here: <https://www.nar.realtor/political-advocacy/coronavirus-sba-cares-act-faqs>