



March 17, 2020

The professional pest control industry, an essential service, is responsible for the protection of public health, food and property. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture have prepared a list of significant public health pests <https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/list-pests-significant-public-health-importance>, many of which are controlled by the professional pest control industry. We play a vital role in protecting our nation's public health and food supply. Pests can spread diseases such as West Nile virus, Lyme disease, salmonellosis, hantavirus and encephalitis. Stinging insects force half a million people to the emergency room every year. Cockroach and rodent allergens trigger asthma attacks in children; rodents contaminate or consume about 20% of the world's food supply and bed bugs can cause allergic reactions. The importance of the pest control industry to the nation as an essential service cannot be understated.

Additionally, the pest control industry is trained, tested and certified in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Technicians routinely employ the use respirators, eye protection, gloves, and clothing to conform with safety requirements established by EPA and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. With over 135,000 service technicians on the ground in the United States backed by over 19,000 companies, we stand ready to continue our fight against pests and diseases. With Covid-19 on the mind of all US citizens, and the world, we want to be sure we continue to serve the country in our battle with the diseases spread by pests.

As an essential service industry, we will continue to service the nation's food production facilities, grocery stores, medical institutions, multifamily housing units, warehouses, homes and businesses. We cannot afford to have our medical facilities, groceries stores or homes uninhabitable due to pests and pest related diseases, particularly as we tell citizens to stay home. There is not a segment of the food industry that could comply with federal sanitation and health regulations without an adequate pest control program.

As you consider next steps regarding emergency response and potential restrictions on business operations in your state, we respectfully request that the pest control industry be recognized as an essential industry, providing a service that is indispensable in the effort to protect public health and our nation's food supply.

Appended below is the language that was used in San Francisco and the California municipalities that have shelter in place orders.

For the purposes of this Order, "Essential Businesses" means: i. Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure; ii. Grocery stores, certified farmers' markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other nongrocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences; iii. Food cultivation, including farming, livestock, and fishing; iv. Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals; v. Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services; vi. Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities; vii. Banks and related financial institutions; viii. Hardware stores; ix. Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses

Sincerely

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