GOVERNOR'S OFFICE – GOV. IGE ANNOUNCES STATE ACTIONS TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Posted on Mar 17, 2020 in Latest News, Press Releases

HONOLULU – Gov. David Y. Ige announced today state actions to slow the spread of COVID-19.

"The actions I'm announcing today may seem extreme to some of you, and we know that it will have negative effects to our economy. But we are confident that taking aggressive actions now will allow us to have a quicker recovery when this crisis is over," said Gov. Ige.

Gov. Ige strongly encouraged our visitors to postpone their vacations for at least the next 30-days and reschedule for a later date.

Effective this Friday (March 20), screening of all passengers disembarking cruise ships will be screened. Our airports are working on implementation plans for screening arriving visitors

Gov. Ige is directing the following:

- Limit social gatherings to groups of 10 people or less to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.
- Close bars and clubs.
- Close restaurants or provide drive-thru, take out, pick-up, or delivery.
- Close theatres, entertainment centers and visitor attractions.
- Avoid any discretionary travel.
- Suspend services and activities in places of worship.
- Stay home if you are a high-risk individual and take additional precautionary measures.
- Do not visit nursing homes or retirement or long-term care facilities.

Latest information on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- All utilities have been directed to take necessary measures to ensure that they can continue to operate in the normal course.
- Dir. Kenneth S. Hara, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency, has the full authority to determine what constitutes critical infrastructure or essential services that will continue operations. This includes utilities, fuel producers, shipping facilities and industry, financial institutions, financial services, telecommunications companies, wholesaler or distributors, grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and other industry vital to our community.
- For both the utilities and essential services, government resources and support can be deployed as necessary.
- The one-week waiting period for unemployment insurance benefits is waived for those unemployed because of COVID-19.
- The Office of Consumer Protection is working with its Landlord Tenant Center, and effective already are emergency provisions applicable to tenants.
- During the emergency, the following additional steps are being discussed with our community's business partners and non-profit organizations to maintain stability for our families by:
    - Ensuring employees have benefits, even if employees are not at work.
    - Halting eviction for non-payment of rent.
    - Halting foreclosures.
    - Working with public and private utility providers to avoid shut-off of service to critical utilities such as electric, gas, water, internet, landline telephone and cell phone.

Gov. Ige has also directed all department and agency heads to review their employees and identify the following:

1. Essential-functions (will be required to report to work)
2. Non-essential – able to work remotely via telework (work from home)
3. Non-essential – unable to work remotely via telework or otherwise
    1. These employees could be re-assigned to work that could be done remotely, as long as it's in the employee's job description and classification

For the next 15 calendar days, Gov. Ige is directing the departments to have all non-essential staff stay home. Essential workers will continue to report to work. All employees will continue to be paid and will still be eligible for sick leave, vacation and other benefits. Every employee should look to their respective department for detailed instructions.

Latest information on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- Temporarily closing State Libraries to public access to evaluate and adjust operations to maintain social distancing. There will be no fees for late returns and the Library online resources will still be available.
- The Dept. of Land and Natural Resources is closing parks, offices with in-person access and large.
- All events at the State Capitol, State Art Museum, and tours at Washington Place are suspended.
- The Dept. of Commerce and Consumer Affairs has suspended all combat sports in Hawaii.
- Cancelled events at Aloha Stadium and Hawai'i Convention Center for the next 30 days.

"It is essential that our government operations and services continue during this time, but we must keep all of our employees and community safe and healthy. We expect more stringent actions in the days to come. These are difficult times, but Hawai'i has a history of coming together when faced with challenges. I'm confident that together we will rise to the task," said Gov. Ige.

###

Media Contact:

Cindy McMillan
Communications Director
Office of the Governor
Office: 808-586-0012
Mobile: 808-265-7974
cindy.mcmillan@hawaii.gov

Latest information on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)