

# IN THE NEWS

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## Butzel Long attorney Rebecca Davies quoted in SHRM article, "State and Local Coronavirus Decrees Raise Questions of Who Is Essential"

3.27.2020

### Related Services

Labor and Employment

At least 28 states and dozens of cities and counties have ordered nonessential businesses to close or curtail operations to fight the spread of the coronavirus, and the number is growing almost daily. Some rules are universal: Hospitals, gas stations, pharmacies, sanitation services and grocery stores are essential everywhere, while dine-in restaurants, theaters and bowling alleys are not.

But there are differences among the orders (liquor stores are closed in some states and open in others) and plenty of gray areas that call for careful introspection and decision-making by businesses. Should they find a way to stay open to pay workers and maintain customers, or close for a less tangible public good—helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

"Those are extremely difficult decisions to make and not the sort of thing most HR professionals were having to deal with five months ago," said Jackie Ford, a partner at Vorys, a labor and employment law firm in Houston, which issued its own citywide shelter-in-place rules on March 24. "It's a whole new skill set."

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