

Additional extraordinary measures are adopted by the Health Ministry to confront the COVID-19 disease

Today, an agreement was published in the Official Federal Gazette, whereby the Ministry of Health adopts additional extraordinary measures to mitigate and control the COVID-19 disease, including the immediate suspension until April 30, 2020, of all non-essential activities in the public, private and social sector.

However, various categories of “essential” activities not subject to suspension were created, among which the most important are:

- a) The directly necessary to face the sanitary contingency, including the medical, paramedical, administrative and support branches in the entire health sector, public and private, as well as the supply and service activities in the pharmaceutical sector (production and distribution), manufacture of supplies, medical equipment, technology for health care, disposal of hazardous waste, cleaning and sanitization of medical units.
- b) The ones corresponding to the fundamental sectors of the economy: financial services, telecommunications, the media, distribution and sale of energy, gasoline and gas, food and non-alcoholic beverages industry, food markets, supermarkets and self-service stores, groceries and sale of prepared foods, transport and cargo services, agricultural, fishing and livestock production, agribusiness, chemical industry, cleaning products, hardware stores, courier services, private security guards, nurseries and children's stays, asylums and stays for the elderly, funeral and burial services, storage services and cold chain of essential supplies, logistics and activities which suspension may have irreversible effects for its continuation.
- c) The conservation and maintenance of critical infrastructure that ensures the production and distribution of essential services such as: drinking water, electricity, gas, oil, gasoline, jet fuel, basic sanitation, public transportation, first-class hospital and medical infrastructure, among others more than could be defined under this category.

In all the essential activities and sectors, it is mandatory to comply with the social distancing measures previously issued by the Ministry of Health, including the prohibition of holding meetings or congregations of more than 50 people. Once the suspension of non-essential activities has ended, the Ministry of Health, together with the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Economy, will issue the guidelines for an orderly, staggered and regionalized return.

Undoubtedly, this is an extreme measure that will clearly affect the operation of multiple companies, except those which activities are of an “essential” nature, a situation that will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

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