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What Does the Shut Down of Non-Essential Services Mean for Condos?

The Ontario Government has **ordered a mandatory closure of all non-essential workplaces** effective as of Tuesday March 24th at 11:59 pm. The closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension if needed.



The starting premise is that all businesses are required to close unless they are considered an essential service as identified in the Government's "**List of Essential Workplaces**" published as of 8:00 pm on March 23rd. We've put together a condensed list of the services that relate specifically to condominiums, which you can download [here](#).



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The bottom line is that most, if not all, services related to the safety, security, sanitation, and essential operation of residential and commercial condominiums will not be impacted and should continue. These include, but are not limited to, the following specific services:

- Property management services (although a focus on providing services remotely should be prioritized);
- Building superintendents;
- Custodial/janitorial services (including cleaning staff, private garbage and recycling removal);
- Landscaping services limited to essential services required to maintain the property (like grass cutting, necessary regrading, etc.), but not upgrades like new tree planting or new fencing if the existing fence is functional ;
- Security services (including private security guards);
- Concierge services (which play a role in building security, safety and maintenance);
- Snow and ice removal;
- Legal, engineering, and other professional services;
- All *urgent* repair services;
- Routine building systems maintenance **but only where it is not appropriate to suspend the work** (including plumbing, electrical, elevator, HVAC, mechanical, fire systems, sprinkler systems, Alarm systems and other similar service providers);

Many, if not all of the services noted above, are vital to the proper functioning of condominiums. And in our view, the Government has clearly signaled that these services must continue so that we can maintain safe living standards in condominiums.



That said, where there does appear to be some flexibility is related to non-urgent repair work. In line with Ottawa Public Health's guidelines for multi-unit residential buildings, **all non-urgent work should be delayed where possible**. Assessing the urgency of work is a matter for each Board to assess and will depend on the particular project. But some general guidelines are:

1. In many cases, proposed work that is "only cosmetic in nature" should probably be delayed.
2. Unnecessary upgrades (involving an "addition, alteration or improvement" within the meaning of Section 97 of the *Condominium Act*) should probably be delayed, unless the "addition, alteration or improvement" is part of a necessary repair.
3. Any other work determined by the Board to be unnecessary or non-essential (at this time) should probably be delayed.
4. More generally, if a proposed repair project will involve any "risky" work in the sense that social distancing (during the work) will be a challenge, and if the Board determines that the work ***can reasonably be delayed***, I think the work should probably be delayed.

As a final comment, Boards will also likely want to establish a list of protocols for all contractors and service providers to follow while on the property (i.e. frequent hand washing, maintaining a 6 foot distance between people, no congregating on common element areas etc). Doing so will help prevent virus transmission and ensure the property remains a safe place for service providers to work.

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