

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz Issues Executive Order Paving the Way for Employees to Return to the Office

by Ryan E. Mick

This morning (March 12), Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz issued the [executive order available at this link](#) revising the state's work-from-home requirement. There are two key provisions for employers to be aware of:

First, effective April 14, 2021 at 11:59 PM, the existing requirement - that any worker who can work from home, must work from home - becomes a "strong" recommendation, and no longer will be a requirement. As the order says, "Remote work strongly recommended. Until April 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm, [the requirement is still in place and] employees who can work from home, must work from home. Beginning April 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm, employers are strongly encouraged to allow employees who can work from home to continue to work from home. Employers are also strongly encouraged to implement reasonable accommodations for at-risk employees or employees with one or more members of their household who have underlying medical conditions and are not yet eligible for vaccination." Section 7(a). (Emphasis added.)

Second, employers continue to have the obligation to develop a written COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. Employers must distribute the plan to employees and train them in how to comply with it. Section 7(d).

As in previous executive orders on this topic, there are stiff penalties for non-compliance: "Any business owner, manager, or supervisor who requires or encourages any of their employees, contractors, vendors, volunteers, or interns to violate this Executive Order is guilty of a gross misdemeanor and upon conviction must be punished by a fine not to exceed \$3,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year." Section 12. In addition, the executive order provides for civil monetary penalties.

The executive order also loosens occupancy restrictions on venues, pools, gyms, and restaurants. Section 7(c).

Dorsey and Whitney's attorneys have been guiding employers through these regulations for the past year—including the drafting of COVID-19 Preparedness Plans that take into

Related People

- Ryan E. Mick

Related Capabilities

- Labor & Employment
- Labor & Employment Guides

account the specifics of your workplace—and are ready to assist you as your employees return to work.