



Beginning today, Columbus Public Health will step up inspections on businesses to assure they are complying with the [Ohio Department of Health's orders](#) for social distancing and basic hygiene to slow the spread of COVID- 19.

“We are at a critical moment in slowing the spread of this highly infectious disease in our community,” said Mayor Andrew J. Ginther. “We have received hundreds of complaints that some businesses are not complying with the Ohio Department of Health’s orders, and we must assure that employees and residents are safe.”

Teams of sanitarians will visit businesses to assess the number of people working, if they are able to work at a safe distance from one another and if soap, water or hand sanitizer are readily available. Those not in compliance will receive a warning letter. A second violation will result in citations and could lead to criminal charges.

“We are pleased that most people and businesses are doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by following the Ohio Department of Health’s orders,” said Dr. Mysheika Roberts, Health Commissioner for Columbus Public Health. “However, we continue to receive complaints from residents that some businesses are not following these orders. We will be sending our teams out to investigate these complaints in order to protect the health and safety of our community.”

Columbus Public Health will not be weighing in on whether a company or workers are essential, only if the place of employment is in compliance with the order. Guidelines for Essential Businesses can be found at corona.ohio.gov.

“Businesses want to do the right thing, but may not know the full extent of the state’s social distancing and safe hygiene requirements. That’s why educating business owners and the public about how we slow the spread of COVID-19 is so important,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “Our ‘education first, citation second’ approach allows people to learn about the state’s order while still giving health officials and law enforcement the ability to issue a citation if someone refuses to cooperate.”