

# Coronavirus (COVID-19): Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Issues Environmental Enforcement Guidance



**Walter Wright, Jr.**  
wwright@mwlaw.com  
(501) 688.8839

04/03/2020

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (“MDEQ”) issued an April 2nd Memorandum (“Memorandum”) addressing compliance with regulatory requirements during the coronavirus (“COVID-19”) pandemic.

The Memorandum was transmitted from MDEQ Interim Executive Director Chris Wells to “All Entities Regulated by MDEQ.”

The Memorandum references prior Proclamation and Executive Orders issued by Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves that:

- Indicate state statutes, rules, regulations, or orders may be temporarily suspended or modified if compliance with such provisions would prevent, hinder, or delay action necessary to cope with the COVID-19 outbreak
- Direct government entities and essential businesses to take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with guidelines set forth by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Mississippi State Department of Health
- Reference measures encouraging employees carrying out essential duties to work from home, sending sick employees home, actively encouraging sick employees to stay home, and separating and sending home employees who appear to have respiratory illness systems
- Reference the issuance of a state-wide “shelter in place” order which requires non-essential business operations and travel to cease

The Memorandum states that MDEQ recognizes that the previously referenced Proclamation/Executive Order may require MDEQ regulated facilities to reduce workforces due to illness, travel restrictions, and social distancing restrictions. As a result, it states that:

. . . temporary suspension of deadlines to comply with certain reporting, document submittal, and other regulatory requirements may be necessary.

The purpose of the Memorandum is to provide guidance to regulated persons and facilities that may experience temporary noncompliance related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Memorandum addresses in some detail:

- Applicability

- Compliance with all Permit and Regulatory Requirements
- Extension of Deadlines
- Permit Renewal Applications
- Compliance Directives, Administrative Orders and Agreed Orders
- All Other Deadlines
- Certifications and Continuing Education
- Electronic Submission of Documents
- Permit Applications for the Office of Pollution Control
- Permit Applications for the Office of Land and Water Resources
- Permit Applications for the Office of Geology
- Other Submittals
- Public Comments
- Public Hearings

A copy of the Memorandum can be downloaded [here](#).