

State of Louisiana  
Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control

John Bel Edwards  
Governor



Juana Marine Lombard  
Commissioner

MARCH 24, 2020

**DUE TO COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”)**

**OPERATIONS OF TOBACCO/VAPE WHOLESALERS & RETAILERS**

On March 22, 2020, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a Stay At Home Order to further combat the COVID-19 (“Coronavirus”) pandemic, which has rapidly spread throughout the State of Louisiana during the past week. Part of this order entails the closure of certain businesses, but essential businesses such as grocery stores, gas station/convenience stores and pharmacy/drug stores are permitted to operate.

Based on the foregoing, the Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (“ATC”) has determined that Governor Edwards’ Stay At Home Order requires closure of all tobacco retailers and vape shops that are not part of a grocery store, gas station/convenience store or pharmacy/drug store. However, licensed retailers may continue to offer online sales of vape or cigar products but must continue to restrict public access and practice social distancing with employees. Delivery of cigarettes remain prohibited under Louisiana law.

Any tobacco or vape businesses that hold a wholesale permit with ATC may continue selling their products in bulk as a wholesaler to their retail customers, while ensuring that social distancing protocols are strictly adhered to. Wholesale dealers shall restrict access to their permitted places of business to the public and customers and shall allow no more than two (2) customers inside of the business at the same time. In lieu of customers entering on to the premises of the wholesaler, ATC is strongly recommending that wholesalers implement curbside pick-up whereby customers place their orders prior to pick-up or delivery, with the wholesaler’s product being transferred directly to customers’ cars without physical contact.

We understand that this is a challenging time but are urging businesses to consider the health and welfare of their employees and customers as Louisiana is under a state of emergency. Governor Edwards and local leaders have issued proclamations which have the weight of law. It is intended to further restrict social gathering to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Any licensee failing to comply with these proclamations may risk having their permit summarily suspended for endangering the public health, safety, and welfare under LSA. R.S. 49:961(c). We understand the concern and uncertainty you may be experiencing surrounding the coronavirus and remain committed to being responsive to the needs of the public. We will update this policy as the situation evolves.

Should you have any questions or concerns related to this matter, please contact ATC at (225) 925-4041.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juana Lombard".

Juana Lombard  
ATC Commissioner