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Factsheet for case BE-2020-12/415

Closing of shops

Factsheet generated on 24 April 2020, 13:02

Country	Belgium, applies nationwide
Time period	Open ended, started on 18 March 2020
Type	Legislation or other statutory regulation
Category	Protection of workers at the workplace – Occupational health and safety
Case created	09 April 2020

Background Information

With regards to shops and the retail sector several strict measures have been in place since the 18th of March. The reasoning behind the measure is to reduce contact between people in shops and reduce the spreading of the virus amongst customers but also between customers and shopkeepers and employees.

The measures are part of the ministerial decree to reduce the spreading of the coronavirus:
<https://economie.fgov.be/sites/default/files/Files/Entreprises/AM-MB-20200403-covid-19.pdf>

Content of measure

From the 18th of March all physical shops are forced to close during weekdays and weekends. Exceptions are made for following shops:

- Food shops (including night shops but only until 22 o'clock)
- Pet food shops
- Pharmacies
- Newsagents
- Petrol stations
- Telecom stores (in case of emergency and 1 cliënt only)
- Other shops that provide medical supplies (in case of emergency and 1 cliënt only)
- Other shops that provide services and goods that are considered to be essential in nature

Shops that are allowed to remain open have to ensure that a safe distance can be maintained. Shop owners are responsible for social distancing within their property.

Access to supermarkets should be controlled in order to limit the number of people entering at the same time. A maximum of 1 person per 10 m² and a maximum of 30 minutes per customer are allowed.

Discounts and promotions within stores are prohibited.

Shops that make use of online stores are forced to deliver their goods. It is not allowed to let people collect their products at the stores.

Use of measure

All shops that are not part of the list of exceptions are forced to close which leads to the majority of shops and businesses being closed. The police is on the lookout for businesses that violate the restrictions and give fines without warning to shops or business that remain open without permission or do not respect the social distancing measures.

Actors, target groups and funding

Actors	Target groups	Funding
National government	All companies	No special funding required

Social partners

Role of social partners	Consulted
Form of involvement	Bi-or tripartite social dialogue bodies

Social partners were consulted about these measures both on the national and sectoral level.

Sectors and occupations

This case is not sector-specific.

This case is not occupation-specific.

Sources

- 18 March 2020: Federal Government (economie.fgov.be)