



**Department
of Commerce**

Division of Financial Institutions

Sheryl Maxfield, Director

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Dear Ohio Bankers,

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Division understands that financial institutions may need to temporarily close a banking office due to staffing challenges or to take other precautionary measures. For example, some institutions may wish to limit foot traffic within a branch and provide services only through the drive-through lanes or by appointment. The Division encourages financial institutions to take steps to increase the safety of their employees and customers, while at the same time providing alternative service options where possible.

The Division is issuing the attached guidance and questionnaire form to assist banks when making the decision to limit branch operations or to close a branch.

Additionally, the following resources may be helpful:

- FDIC Coronavirus Information for Bankers & Consumers: <https://www.fdic.gov/news/news/financial/2020/fil20017.pdf>
- ABA Industry Resources: <https://www.aba.com/banking-topics/risk-management/incident-response/coronavirus>
- Ohio Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/resources/covid-19-and-community-spread>
- CSBS Informational site on coronavirus: <https://www.csbs.org/information-covid-19-coronavirus>

Kevin Allard
Superintendent



Guidance 2020-01

Guidance on Coronavirus/COVID-19 Branch Closing Procedures

Ohio chartered banks that are limiting branch operations or closing branches as a precautionary measure related to coronavirus (COVID-19) should fill out the attached questionnaire and return it to the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of Financial Institutions as soon as possible.

As a reminder, temporary closures of banking office locations for 48 hours or less must be reported to the Division. For closures lasting longer than 48 hours, advance permission from the Division Superintendent is required. However, the Division is able to work with institutions facing any challenges meeting these requirements.

Branches continuing to offer drive-through teller window operations that allow for the general business of banking will not be considered "closed," even if the lobby is closed to foot traffic, and Division approval is not needed for this change in operation.

Branches closed to both lobby and drive-through traffic will be considered "closed." The Division will respond with an approval or denial within 24 hours of receipt of notification of a branch closure. The Division will make every effort to approve extended closures.

Banks should try to make special arrangements to assist customers who may have safe deposit boxes at branch locations being closed or who need other specialized banking services.

Please return the form and any related questions to Corporate Specialist Anika Parker at anika.parker@com.ohio.gov.



Temporary Branch Closing and/or Operational Changes Questionnaire

Instructions: Complete this form if the bank's branches will be temporarily impacted by closings (full or partial) and/or operational changes.

- 1. Bank name:**

- 2. Branch location:**

- 3. Expected length of temporary closing and/or operational changes:**

- 4. Describe banking activities to be discontinued at branch:**

- 5. Describe banking activities to be continued at branch:**

- 6. Have you notified the bank's federal regulator?**

- 7. Name, telephone number, e-mail address of contact for additional information:**

When deciding whether to close a branch or limit operations, please ensure customers are fully informed by using multiple communication methods such as email, lobby signs, and advertising.

Impacted customers should also be reminded of other available banking options, such as nearby branches, mobile deposit, online banking, drive-up windows and ATMs.

Thank you for notifying the Division of Financial Institutions (the "Division") of your bank's temporary branch closing and/or operational changes. Please notify the Division in writing when the branch re-opens and normal operational changes resume.

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