

## **International Principles for Safeguarding Essential Economic Functions in the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Governments should acknowledge the inevitable tension between social distancing (i.e., “shelter in place,” “stay at home,” and other quarantine orders) and the need to allow for essential economic activity. Taking the following principles into account will help in addressing this formidable challenge:

1. **Governments should clearly and comprehensively define essential infrastructure, services, and workers**, and they should provide local law enforcement officials the tools they need to identify workers and services that are exempt from quarantine orders. One good reference is the [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#) issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which identifies critical infrastructure and related workforce categories that should remain exempt from quarantine orders. The U.S. State Department has shared this guidance internationally.
2. **Governments should emphasize open, transparent, and ongoing industry consultation** as an indispensable part of the preparation of lists such as the one above.
3. **Governments should ensure sub-central governments follow the same rules** though the course of the pandemic may require quarantine orders to vary over time and from place to place. A patchwork approach in which state, provincial, and local governments adopt divergent or unclear guidance of their own may inadvertently complicate pandemic response. Similarly, countries in a customs union or other close economic partnership will face the same imperative for close coordination.
4. **Governments should provide frequent updates to this guidance based on ongoing input** as new aspects of the pandemic’s impact on different economic sectors informs authorities’ understanding of infrastructure, services, and workers that should be deemed essential.
5. **Governments should coordinate with international partners to align access and movement policies** and consider the international implications of rules in this area for business operations that depend on global supply chains.