



U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Update

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many state and local jurisdictions ordered mandatory business closures, under penalty of law, for all entities other than those deemed “essential businesses.” Due to the unique and severe nature of the COVID-19 health crisis, some state and local authorities applied overbroad standards for such business closure orders and only after that acknowledged that additional business entities should be deemed “essential” and permitted to remain open.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued guidance on “essential business” but this guidance was often copied and pasted in state and local closure orders. RV parks and campgrounds were not exempted from such orders – and accordingly deemed “essential business” – and this issue had to be addressed in practically every state.

The CISA Commercial Facilities Sector consists of eight subsectors, of which campgrounds were listed under Outdoor Events rather than Lodging.

On October 29, 2021, Jeff Sims, Senior Director of State Relations & Program Advocacy, National ARVC; Al Johnson, National ARVC Public Affairs Chair; Ann Emerson, KOA and National ARVC lobbyist David Ransom of MWE had a virtual meeting with Dr. Michael A. Stone, Section Chief – Commercial Facilities, Stakeholder Engagement Division, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency and Harvey Scher, Chair; Stacey Rivera Co-Chair of the CISA Lodging Facilities Sector.

CISA agreed to move campgrounds from Outdoor Events to the Lodging subsector and add “RV parks” at that meeting.

Following that meeting, Dr. Stone responded to David Ransom, “Good afternoon, and the pleasure to meet you and the team was all mine. The good news is that the transfer became effective immediately upon agreement from the Chair and (Harvey and Stacey) of the lodging subsector. I am working with the DHS Critical Infrastructure Partnership Advisory Council (CIPAC) Office to retrieve the Charter to add the RV Park and Campground Industry, which has become a little sidetracked with Commercial Facilities Sector Security events occurring and the holidays. Nonetheless, once I receive the Charter, I will add the information and provide a review to Stacey and Harvey for acknowledgment. After their acknowledgment; I will gladly reach out to you and Jeff to inform the task is complete.”

National ARVC also requested CISA to add RV parks and campgrounds as essential businesses. CISA said they were waiting on the next “big thing” before they make any changes in response; Jeff Sims stated, “This is unacceptable because while pandemics may come and go, natural disasters will continue to happen on a more frequent basis.”

National ARVC and its members throughout the nation believe RV parks and campgrounds must be deemed essential businesses regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and any future health crises and natural disasters. The reasoning for this designation is clear:

- In the current pandemic, RV parks and campgrounds are ideal for addressing public safety for the following reasons:
 - Able to adapt to CDC guidelines
 - Remote check-in
 - Social distancing
 - Sheltering in place
 - Accommodate traveling medical personnel and first responders
 - Provide essential goods and services -- many have groceries, laundries, and sell propane

- In natural disasters – which occur much more frequently than health pandemics – RV parks and campgrounds are essential for the following reasons:
 - They accommodate displaced families;
 - They accommodate traveling medical personnel and first responders; and
 - They accommodate essential workers restoring electric and other services.

In addition to providing a critical source of temporary lodging in a pandemic or natural disaster, RV parks and campgrounds provide Americans with the opportunity to control their environment as they seek the physical and mental health benefits of the great outdoors. Camping is one of the lowest risk activities. It is demonstrably safer than grocery shopping, eating outdoors at a restaurant, or even walking outdoors in a major city.

National ARVC is attempting to set up an in-person meeting with CISA in Washington, D.C., while our delegation is attending the RV's Move America Week the first week in June 2022.

RV parks and campgrounds must be deemed essential businesses and thus be allowed to operate and continue serving Americans in a health pandemic or natural disaster. National ARVC is committed to the success of this cause for the health and prosperity of the outdoor hospitality industry.

