www.morganbrown.com

CLIENT ALERT: Massachusetts State Blue Laws Again Restrict Retail and Manufacturing Business Openings on Columbus Day and Veterans Day

In August 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Labor ("DOL") issued guidance reminding retail employers that their hours of operation are restricted on two fall holidays. Retail and most manufacturing establishments may not open prior to 12:00 p.m. on Columbus Day, October 11, 2010, and prior to 1:00 p.m. on Veterans Day, November 11, 2010. In addition, any retail establishment that operates on Columbus Day or Veterans Day must compensate employees who work on the holiday with time and one-half pay, and "such work shall be voluntary and refusal to work… shall not be grounds for discrimination, dismissal, discharge, reduction in hours, or any other penalty."

The DOL authorized local police departments to issue special permits for retail stores and businesses to open on Columbus Day before 12:00 p.m. and Veterans Day before 1:00 p.m. Any business may open on Columbus Day after 12:00 p.m. or on Veterans Day after 1:00 p.m. without a permit. Last year, the DOL refused to allow police chiefs to issue permits for Thanksgiving and Christmas retail openings and it is not expected to change its position for 2010.

The relevant regulations allow police chiefs with discretion to grant or refuse permit requests within their respective municipalities. According to the DOL, in authorizing permits, "chiefs may also impose reasonable terms and conditions appropriate to the nature of the business and the good of the community, at their discretion."

Massachusetts has complex wage and hour standards, including holiday opening restrictions and premium pay requirements. For more information or assistance in obtaining a holiday opening permit please contact your MBJ attorney.

Daniel Field is an attorney with Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP, and may be reached at (617) 523-6666 or at dfield@morganbrown.com. Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP

© 2026 Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP

focuses exclusively on representing employers in employment and labor matters.

This alert was published on September 20, 2010.

This publication, which may be considered advertising under the ethical rules of certain jurisdictions, should not be construed as legal advice or a legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances by Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP and its attorneys. This newsletter is intended for general information purposes only and you should consult an attorney concerning any specific legal questions you may have.Customize the Author Byline?
byline-default

© 2026 Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP