



State of New Hampshire

Banking Department

53 Regional Drive, Suite 200
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Telephone: (603) 271-3561
FAX: (603) 271-1090 or (603) 271-0750

Branch Closings

Clarification and FAQs

The New Hampshire Banking Department (Department) is providing further clarification on its guidance issued on March 13, 2020, concerning branch closings resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below you will find clarified guidance on Branch Closings and also new FAQs.

Please direct any communications to NHBD@banking.nh.gov.

Branch Closing Guidance- Updated on Monday, March 16, 2020:

Branch Closings/Reduction of Branch Hours

- Banks or credit unions are authorized to use only the drive through portion of a branch (and close its lobby and offices) without requesting approval for a branch closure under RSA 383-A:8-801.
- Similarly, a bank or credit union may adjust the normal business hours of any of its branches without the approval of the Bank Commissioner if such adjustments are necessary due to staff shortages or other impacts resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Pursuant to RSA 383-A:8-801(c), if a bank or credit union must close a branch for more than 48 hours due to COVID-19, notice in the form of a letter or email should be sent to the Department and the Department will confirm receipt. If the Department has any concerns about the closure it will contact the institution.
- No submission for a closure is required if the branch is closed for less than 48 hours (not including legal holidays and days the branch is not otherwise scheduled to be open, such as Sundays).
- If a bank or credit union adjusts its branch hours, closes a branch, or limits access in any branch to drive through services only, it must ensure its customers and members are aware of any such changes.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Where can I find a branch closing application form?

A: No special form is required. Simply send an email to NHBD@banking.nh.gov identifying the branch that is impacted by any closure, what hours are impacted, and the branch street address. You may also send a written notification, if you wish, to:

NH Banking Department
53 Regional Drive, Suite 200
Concord, NH 03301

Q: Should I include any additional information?

A: Yes. Tell us who to contact if we have questions or concerns. If you know how long the branch might be closed, please include that information.

Q: Will I receive a reply?

A: Yes. The Department will send you a reply acknowledging receipt. If we have any questions or concerns we will follow-up later, but you may close the branch once you have notified us. Please note that the requirement to notify the Department only applies to branch closings that are expected to last longer than 48 hours.

Q: How do you count a “48-hour closing”?

A: A 48-hour closing is any time a branch is not open for 48 consecutive hours (two business days) during what would be normal business days for the branch (excluding legal holidays). For instance, if due to staffing issues a branch closes on Saturday during its normal 9:00 am to 12:00 pm business hours, but opens again on Monday morning, there is no required notification to the Department. Only if a branch is closed for two consecutive business days is it a 48-hour closure.

Q: Do we need to notify the Department when the branch reopens?

A: Yes.

Q: Does the guidance apply to permanent branch relocations, closings or the opening of a new branch?

A: This guidance applies only to *temporary* branch closings related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It does not apply in any other circumstances.

Q: May we close branch lobbies to the public and ask all customers to conduct business via a drive-up window at that branch to maintain “social distance”?

A: Yes. Please refer to the updated guidance above. However, if you choose to reduce branch hours, close the lobby limiting consumer access to drive-up only, or temporarily close a branch due to COVID-19 impacts, these actions must be clearly communicated to your customers.

If you have an other questions, please email them to NHBD@banking.nh.gov.