



COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Retail

May 19, 2020

covid19.ca.gov



OVERVIEW

On March 19, 2020, the State Public Health Officer and Director of the California Department of Public Health issued an order requiring most Californians to stay at home to disrupt the spread of COVID-19 among the population.

The impact of COVID-19 on the health of Californians is not yet fully known. Reported illness ranges from very mild (some people have no symptoms) to severe illness that may result in death. Certain groups, including people aged 65 or older and those with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk of hospitalization and serious complications. Transmission is most likely when people are in close contact with an infected person, even if that person does not have any symptoms or has not yet developed symptoms.

Precise information about the number and rates of COVID-19 by industry or occupational groups, including among critical infrastructure workers, is not available at this time. There have been multiple outbreaks in a range of workplaces, indicating that workers are at risk of acquiring or transmitting COVID-19 infection. Examples of these workplaces include long-term care facilities, prisons, food production, warehouses, meat processing plants, and grocery stores.

As stay-at-home orders are modified, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

Key prevention practices include:

- ✓ physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- ✓ use of face coverings by employees (where respiratory protection is not required) and customers/clients,
- ✓ frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- ✓ training employees on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention plan.

In addition, it will be critical to have in place appropriate processes to identify new cases of illness in workplaces and, when they are identified, to intervene quickly and work with public health authorities to halt the spread of the virus.

PURPOSE

This document provides guidance for retailers to support a safe, clean environment for workers. The guidance is not intended to revoke or repeal any employee rights, either statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained, and is not exhaustive, as it does not include county health orders, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA.¹ Stay current on changes to public health guidance and state/local orders, as the COVID-19 situation continues. Cal/OSHA has more safety and health guidance on their [Cal/OSHA Guidance on Requirements to Protect Workers from Coronavirus webpage](#). CDC has additional guidance [for businesses and employers](#) and for [food and grocery retailers](#).



Worksite Specific Plan

- Establish a written, worksite-specific COVID-19 prevention plan at every facility, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas, and designate a person at each facility to implement the plan.
- Identify contact information for the local health department where the facility is located for communicating information about COVID-19 outbreaks among employees.
- Train and communicate with employees and employee representatives on the plan.
- Regularly evaluate the workplace for compliance with the plan and document and correct deficiencies identified.
- Investigate any COVID-19 illness and determine if any work-related factors could have contributed to risk of infection. Update the plan as needed to prevent further cases.
- Identify close contacts (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) of an infected employee and take steps to isolate COVID-19 positive employee(s) and close contacts.
- Adhere to the guidelines below. Failure to do so could result in workplace illnesses that may cause operations to be temporarily closed or limited.



Topics for Employee Training

- Information on [COVID-19](#), how to prevent it from spreading, and which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
- Self-screening at home, including temperature and/or symptom checks using [CDC guidelines](#).
- The importance of not coming to work if employees have symptoms of COVID-19 as [described by the CDC](#) such as a frequent cough, fever, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, recent loss of taste or smell, or if they or someone they live with have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- To seek medical attention if their symptoms become severe, including persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, or bluish lips or face. Updates and further details are available on [CDC's webpage](#).

- The importance of frequent handwashing with soap and water, including scrubbing with soap for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when employees cannot get to a sink or handwashing station, per [CDC guidelines](#)).
- The importance of physical distancing, both at work and off work time (see Physical Distancing section below).
- Proper use of face coverings, including:
 - Face coverings do not protect the wearer and are not personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Face coverings can help protect people near the wearer, but do not replace the need for physical distancing and frequent handwashing.
 - Face coverings must cover the nose and mouth.
 - Employees should wash or sanitize hands before and after using or adjusting face coverings.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Face coverings should be washed after each shift.
- Ensure temporary or contract workers at the facility are also properly trained in COVID-19 prevention policies and have necessary PPE. Discuss these responsibilities ahead of time with organizations supplying temporary and/or contract workers.
- Information on employer or government-sponsored leave benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information [on government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID-19](#), including employee's sick leave rights under [the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee's rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the Governor's [Executive Order N-62-20](#).



Individual Control Measures and Screening

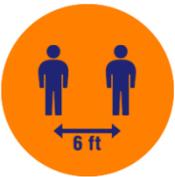
- Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and any vendors, contractors, or other workers entering the establishment. Make sure the temperature/symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible. Both screeners and employees should wear face coverings for the screening.
- If requiring self-screening at home, which is an appropriate alternative to providing it at the establishment, ensure that screening was performed prior to the worker leaving the home for their shift and follows [CDC guidelines](#), as described in the Topics for Employee Training section above
- Encourage workers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
- Employers should provide and ensure workers use face coverings and all required protective equipment, including eye protection and gloves where necessary. This includes protections for cashiers, baggers, and other workers with regular and repeated interaction with customers.
- Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for workers who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items.
- Employees should also be provided and use protective equipment when offloading and storing delivered goods. Employees should inspect deliveries and perform disinfection measures prior to storing goods in warehouses and facilities when there are signs of tampering.
- Face coverings are strongly recommended when employees are in the vicinity of others. Workers should have face coverings available and wear them in retail facilities, offices, parking lots or garages, or in company-owned vehicles. Face coverings must not be shared.
- Retailers must take reasonable measures, including posting signage in strategic and highly-visible locations, to remind the public that they should use face coverings and practice physical distancing.



Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas, such as break rooms, lunch areas and areas of ingress and egress including stairways, stairwells, escalators, handrails, and elevator controls. Frequently disinfect commonly used surfaces, including shopping carts, baskets, conveyor belts, registers (including self-checkout), scanners, register telephones, hand-held devices, counters, door handles, shelving, ATM PIN pads, customer assistance call buttons, handwashing facilities, etc.
- Clean and sanitize shared equipment, including but not limited to, pallet jacks, ladders, supply carts, time clocks, payment portals, and styluses between each use.
- Clean touchable surfaces between shifts or between users, whichever is more frequent, including but not limited to working surfaces, tools, and stationary and mobile equipment controls.
- Equip customer entrances and exits, checkout stations, customer changing rooms with proper sanitation products, including hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, and provide personal hand sanitizers to all frontline staff (e.g., cashiers).
- Ensure that sanitary facilities stay operational and stocked at all times and provide additional soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer when needed.
- Provide resources to promote employees' personal hygiene. This will include tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, adequate time for hand-washing, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, disinfectants, and disposable towels.
- When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Use disinfectants labeled to be effective against emerging viral pathogens, diluted household bleach solutions (5 tablespoons per gallon of water), or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol that are appropriate for the surface. Provide employees training on manufacturer's directions and Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use. Workers using cleaners or disinfectants should wear gloves and other protective equipment as required by the product instructions.
- Adjust or modify store hours to provide adequate time for regular, thorough cleaning and product stocking. Stagger stocking so that associates are in different aisles.

- Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the employees' job duties. Procure options for third-party cleaning companies to assist with the increased cleaning demand, as needed.
- Install hands-free devices, if possible, including motion sensor lights, contactless payment systems, automatic soap and paper towel dispensers, and timecard systems.
- Encourage the use of debit or credit cards by customers, for example, through signage, encourage customers to clean their reusable bags frequently through in-store signage, and require customers who bring reusable bags to bag their own purchases.
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in offices and other spaces.



Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Retailers should create clearly-marked curbside or outside pickup points that maintain physical distance with visual cues or other measures, and have purchased goods available there or available through home delivery.
- Implement measures to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between workers and customers. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate to where workers and/or employees should stand).
- Take measures at checkout stations to minimize exposure between cashiers and customers, such as Plexiglas barriers. Employees should also wear face coverings and customers are strongly recommended to wear face coverings as well. Some jurisdictions already require face coverings outside the home. Display signage at entrances, checkout lanes, and registers to remind customers of physical distancing at every opportunity.
- Consider offering workers who request modified duties options that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., managing inventory rather than working as a cashier or managing administrative needs through telework).
- Adjust in-person meetings, if they are necessary, to ensure physical distancing and use smaller individual meetings at facilities to maintain physical distancing guidelines.

- Place additional limitations on the number of workers in enclosed areas to ensure at least six feet of separation to limit transmission of the virus.
- Stagger employee breaks, in compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain physical distancing protocols.
- Close breakrooms, use barriers, or increase distance between tables/chairs to separate workers and discourage congregating during breaks. Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating that ensures physical distancing.
- Close in-store bars, bulk-bin options, and public seating areas and discontinue product sampling.
- Dedicate shopping hours for vulnerable populations, including seniors and those medically vulnerable, preferably at a time following a complete cleaning.
- Increase pickup and delivery service options for customers to help minimize in-store contact and maintain social distancing, such as online ordering and curbside pick-up.
- Provide a single, clearly designated entrance and separate exit to help maintain physical distancing where possible.
- Adjust maximum occupancy rules based on the size of the facility to limit the number of people in a store at one time, using no more than 50% maximum occupancy.
- Be prepared to queue customers outside while still maintaining physical distance, including through the use of visual cues.
- Encourage employees to practice physical distancing during pickup and delivery by talking with the customer through a passenger window, loading items directly into the customer's trunk without contact, or leaving items at their door.
- Make some locations pickup- or delivery-only to minimize employee/customer contact, where possible.
- Install transfer-aiding materials, such as shelving and bulletin boards, to reduce person-to-person hand-offs where possible. Wherever possible, use contactless signatures for deliveries.
- Expand direct store delivery window hours to spread out deliveries and prevent overcrowding.
- Ask non-employee truck drivers, delivery agents, or vendors who are required to enter retail locations to have their employees follow the guidance of local, state, and federal governments regarding wearing face coverings and PPE.



Additional Considerations Drive-In Retail, Including Drive-In Movie Theaters

- For drive-in operations, such as movie theaters or restaurants, vehicles must be spaced at least six feet apart and no gatherings outside of vehicles should take place. Parking spaces for viewing at drive-in theaters must be limited to either every other spot or reconfigured to ensure adequate distancing between vehicles.
- Each vehicle may only be occupied by members of the same household who have already been in close contact with each other. If not utilizing restroom facilities or picking up concessions, patrons must remain in their vehicles. Patrons cannot sit outside of their vehicles, e.g., to view a drive-in movie near their vehicle.
- There must be regular cleaning and sanitizing of on-site restrooms for drive-in retail facilities and drive-in movie theaters.
- Cashless and touchless transactions systems are preferred wherever possible. If available, orders, reservations and payments for the drive-in business should be made in advance online or over the phone.
- Drive-in movie theater concessions should be ordered online or over the phone, if possible, and be available for curbside pick-up. Walk-up concession services should be available for pick-up of pre-ordered items. Patrons should wear face coverings when picking up pre-ordered items from the concessionaire. If pre-ordering items is not possible, ensure that customers maintain proper physical distancing when waiting to order food items.
- Drive-in movie theaters should suspend double-feature offerings to limit the amount of time patrons spend on-site and avoid the need for intermissions.
- Any playgrounds, outdoor eating areas, picnic tables, or other amenities at drive-in movie theaters should be closed.



Curbside Pick-up for Libraries

- Libraries can offer curbside pick-up for items patrons place on hold or through another type of reservation-based system. Patrons should place a hold in the library's online catalog or make an appointment in order to make use of the curbside pick-up service. Libraries should consider how to support equity issues for patrons without mobile devices or internet access at home. For example, promote a phone number for readers' advisory services and check-out.
 - In addition to making materials like books and movies available, libraries may consider single-use projects (like take-home craft kits) that can be linked to a library's online programming.
 - Libraries should limit loans of games and toys.
- Once the library item is available, patrons should receive an email or phone call indicating that the item is ready for curbside pick-up. Libraries should put signage in appropriate, clearly-marked places to indicate the curbside pick-up instructions, e.g. where to park.
- Libraries may have patrons call the library when they arrive at the curbside pick-up location.
- Libraries should institute a contactless curbside pick-up system. For example, this could involve staff placing the pre-ordered items on a table or in a cart near the parking lot or designated curbside pick-up location with instructions that patrons wait to retrieve the items until library staff and other patrons have left the area. Items should be placed in labeled bags for ease of pick-up and to avoid unnecessary contact with the items.
- If a patron has mobility issues, libraries should provide accommodations, such as placing bagged items on the hood or in the trunk of a patron's vehicle. If this is not the contactless method the library is already instituting, patrons should request this when calling the library upon arrival.
- If feasible, libraries should implement contactless return system. Libraries may also accept returned items in carts or other containers that can be isolated and remain untouched for at least three days before handling or re-shelving.
 - The federal [Institute of Museum and Library Services \(IMLS\)](#), in collaboration with OCLC and Battelle, is creating and distributing science-based information and recommended practices designed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to staff and visitors who

are engaging in the delivery or use of museum, library, and archival services.

- This research will include testing and developing guidance for cleaning and disinfecting of library materials. Visit oc.lc/realm-project to receive project updates.
- Libraries should consider additional steps when instituting curbside pick-up, including:
 - Discuss if security costs may increase to support staff entering or exiting the facility or to manage temporary changes in the library procedures.
 - Consider only offering curbside service at certain branches first to ensure proper staffing and security.
 - Consider supporting physical distancing for staff in the building by implementing one-way markers in the library stacks.
 - Share plans with community organizations, local businesses, schools and other stakeholders. Ask for help in sending out information about the library's services and to review translations for cultural appropriateness.
 - For medium/large library buildings, weigh the feasibility of adding temporary handwashing stations for staff if needed to support frequent handwashing.
- The California State Library will produce additional guidance on other services libraries can perform in future phases of the roadmap.

¹Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. The retail industry must comply with all [Cal/OSHA](#) standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#). Additionally, employers must be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.

