



COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Stores GREY – LOCKDOWN

This document provides public health information, guidance and recommendation on prevention of COVID-19 as issued by Ottawa Public Health and should not be considered a regulatory document. The information included here is intended for readers in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. For information on regulatory restrictions in place for the regions of Ontario and the City of Ottawa, please see the [Government of Ontario response framework](#) and the [City of Ottawa Provincial and City Rules](#).

The province's [COVID-19 Response Framework](#) has five levels of public health measures **Prevent**, **Protect**, **Restrict**, **Control** and **Lockdown**. This guidance document describes the public health measures for the **retail sector** aligned with the [Reopening Ontario Act](#) and [City of Ottawa specific enhanced measures](#). A time-limited province wide Shutdown beginning on Saturday December 26th at 12:01 am will place us in the **Grey - Lockdown Level**.

The Ontario Government placed these requirements and restrictions on the **retail sector** – including grocery stores and pharmacies in the **Grey - Lockdown Level**.

Restrictions

Please consult the [City of Ottawa webpage](#) for details on the restrictions applicable to **retail stores** in Ottawa during the time-limited province wide Shutdown.

Please refer to [O.Reg.82/20 \(Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c. 17\)](#) for details.

The following guidance is specific to the **retail sector** and is intended to guide you in being COVID Wise in the workplace. This information will help you plan and implement COVID Wise protocols to keep staff and customers safer. For additional information and resources, please consult the Ottawa Public Health [Business and Workplace COVID-19 webpage](#).



Safety plan

Workplaces must prepare and make available a safety plan. This safety plan must:

- Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility, or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
- Include measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning, disinfecting and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.
- Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.

Letter of Instruction

A new [Letter of Instruction](#) (LOI) issued by Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health for the City of Ottawa, provides additional measures under the Provincial legislation and came into effect December 23, 2020. The additional measures include:

- Businesses are asked to report to OPH if there are 2 or more COVID-19 positive cases within 14 days and need to comply with the investigation.
- Businesses must calculate the square footage of the establishment and the maximum capacity, according to current provincial legislation, and post this information for everyone to see.
- Businesses must ensure physical distancing of 2 metres is maintained between employees throughout the workplace and strongly encourages the use of masks at all times.

Employee screening and reporting

Your business will need policies and procedures to address the following:

- Active staff screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift, and
- Preventing staff from working if they show signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19

Ottawa Public Health offers an [employee screening questionnaire](#) that can be used to actively screen each employee before each of their shifts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Practice physical distancing

- [Physical distancing](#) of at least two metres/six feet is always required.
- Plan and modify the layout of your facility to ensure enough space is provided for staff and customers to maintain physical distancing.



Calculate capacity

Calculate the maximum number of people permitted in the facility that allows for physical distancing as noted above, or **complies with provincial gathering limits**, whichever is less.

- It is the responsibility of the owners and operators to determine the capacity specific of the space or venue based on the layout of the venue, equipment or structural obstacles, flow of traffic, activity requirements and achieving the required physical distancing
- Post occupancy limits within each space, including washrooms, locker rooms, and fitness rooms.

Limit capacity

Limit the number of people based on calculations above and following the provincial restrictions.

- Post the capacity limit for everyone to see.
- Designate and manage entry and exit points to control the number of people entering the facility and each space within. If the maximum number of people is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals and departures, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
- Review and coordinate the use of all amenities to ensure physical distancing can be maintained in common areas if the facility is a community centre, multi-purpose facility, or other complex with multiple uses.

Modify the space

Modify and arrange site/floor plan to maintain physical distancing and reduce contact.

- Design traffic flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- Increase floor marking and signage to allow people to find rooms and amenities more easily.
- Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas and places where people may gather.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies, washrooms, and use staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.

Manage lines & Avoid Congregation

Monitor and manage lines within and outside the facility.

- Post [physical distancing signs](#) at all entrances, service desks or otherwise.
- Place visual/textural markers spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g., tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and guide customers.
- Encourage the use of masks/face coverings for guests waiting/lining-up outside.
- Assign staff to monitor lines and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep two metres/six feet apart.
- No sampling product stations, or buffets should be permitted.
- Consider pre-order/pick-up/delivery models to limit interactions.

- o Refer to [OPH's information for Food Premises Offering Delivery and Pick-Up Services](#) for more information.

Use of masks

- All staff and patrons must wear a mask or face covering indoors, as per City of Ottawa [bylaw](#) and [O. Reg. 263/20](#).
- Owners and operators must develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks, as per a new City of Ottawa [bylaw](#), and train staff on the policy and protocols. More information is available [here](#).
- OPH strongly recommends that employees wear a mask at all times, even when they are more than 2 metres apart.

Provide public access to hand hygiene stations and supplies

- Ensure that alcohol-based hand rub is provided at all public entrances and exits of the establishment, as per the Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law (By-law No. 2020-186) and the [Letter of Instruction to Business Owners and Operators](#),.
- Encourage patrons to wash their hands properly and frequently.
- Refer to OPH's webpage on [hand hygiene](#).

Environmental Cleaning Guidance

Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. The following cleaning and disinfection recommendations aim to reduce the risks associated with surface transmission. Remember to clean surfaces first, then disinfect them.

- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Clean and disinfect these surfaces often
 - o Refer to OPH's [cleaning and disinfection checklist](#)
- Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
 - o Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants](#) for use against COVID-19
 - o Refer to [Health Canada's Drug Product Database](#) online query to search by product name, active ingredient, company etc.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions on any products being used:
 - o properly prepare solutions
 - o allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill germs (see product label)
 - o wear gloves when handling cleaning products, including wipes
 - o wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer
 - o do not mix different cleaning or disinfecting products
 - o in addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty

For more information, consult Public Health Ontario's fact sheet on [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#).



Transactions

- If possible, encourage patrons to pay by debit or credit card (tap if possible) and have staff wipe the machine and use sanitizer immediately after each interaction
- Staff may choose to wear gloves. If they do so, they should practice proper glove use (see Practice proper glove use below)
- All cashiers should have hand sanitizer at their cash, if possible.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The employer must determine what PPE is required and ensure that it is worn by workers and educate staff on the [proper use and disposal of masks](#) and PPE.

Practice proper glove use: Gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene, as they do not guarantee that foods or surfaces are not contaminated. Gloves should always be worn when a staff member or volunteer handling food has a break in their skin or has a bandage that is covering a wound. In the event you should need to or choose to wear gloves:

- Wash your hands properly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before you put on gloves.
- Do not touch your face or mask with your gloves on.
- Do not touch personal items, such as a cell phone, while wearing gloves. Throw the gloves out in a closed garbage bin right away after use and wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not re-use gloves that are made for one use.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems

- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:
 - maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or
 - open windows and doors if it is safe to do so.
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.
- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.
- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, position fan with an upward movement to avoid blowing of air across people and surfaces.
- There is no evidence the use of portable air purifiers will prevent the spread of COVID-19. If used, follow the manufacturer's directions to decide where best to place the device. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on maintenance.
- For more information, review the [COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet](#).

Enhance cleaning and disinfection

- Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
- Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19](#).



Modify & Adapt

- **Consider at-risk populations:** Some businesses have begun a practice where they have dedicated the first hour of in-store operation for customers who are older adults, or for those with underlying medical conditions.
- **Staff support:** There are many mental health resources available. For further information, visit [OPH's webpage on Mental Health and COVID-19](#).

Front desk, sales, and registration

- Install [physical barriers](#) at front/service desks (e.g., plexiglass).

OPH Resources

- [OPH COVID-19 main page](#)
- [OPH COVID-19 Information for Workplaces](#)
- [OPH's information for Food Premises Offering Delivery and Pick-Up Services](#)
- [OPH's cleaning and disinfection checklist](#)
- [Poster: How to practice physical distancing in retail stores](#)
- [Poster: Shopping Etiquette - English](#)
- [Poster: Shopping Etiquette - Arabic](#)
- [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law \(By-law No. 2020-186\)](#)
- [OPH Letter to Businesses and Operators](#)
- [Mask Required Poster](#)

Provincial Resources

- [Public Health Ontario's fact sheet on cleaning and disinfection for public settings](#)
- [Ministry of Health - COVID-19 guidance for food premises](#)
- [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 3](#)

Federal Resources

- Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants](#) for use against COVID-19

More information

For more information, visit our website at ottawapublichealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19

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