



## COVID-19 Guidance for the Retail Store Sector

This guidance document provides you with operational guidance on how to implement regulations and other requirements that have been issued by the Province of Ontario, City of Ottawa, and public health officials. You will also find additional *recommendations* on how to be COVID wise in the workplace. This detailed guidance can be found in the table below. Please consult the links to posters and resources included to further support your business, customers and employees in being COVID wise in the workplace.

Please note however, that this is not a regulatory document and should not be treated as such. This guidance document does not replace applicable legal requirements nor does it purport to be or to provide an interpretation of the law. You should always refer to [the provincial public health measures and restrictions that apply to your business or organization](#), to City of Ottawa rules including the [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law](#), Class Orders of the Medical Officer of Health of the City of Ottawa that are posted on the Ottawa Public Health [website](#), and mandatory instructions issued by the Medical Officer of Health including the [December 18, 2020 letter of instruction](#) to all employers and persons responsible for a retail business or shopping mall.

Businesses and organizations will encounter situations where provincial rules and local public health rules cover the same types of public health measures. When this is the case, businesses/organizations will need to ensure compliance with the measure that is most restrictive in terms of preventing the spread of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 situation is evolving quickly. As such, Ottawa Public Health's guidance is subject to change as new information is received. Please regularly visit [OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus](https://OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus) for up-to-date information, including the current status of enhanced measures in Ottawa. This guidance document and other supporting resources are available on OPH's [Businesses and Workplaces COVID-19 web page](#).

## Operational Guidance for the Retail Store Sector

<p><b>Safety Plans</b></p>	<p>The <a href="#">safety plan</a> will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility, or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.</li> <li>• Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.</li> <li>• Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working at, or attending, the location.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Screening</b></p>	<p><b>How to perform staff screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use OPH’s <a href="#">online screening tool</a> or refer to the <a href="#">printable screening tool to</a> screen staff before each shift.</li> <li>• Prevent staff from working if:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ They show any signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 before, or during their shift;</li> <li>○ They have come in close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, or;</li> <li>○ They have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If staff experience symptoms of COVID-19 during their shift, they should return home, self-isolate and visit. <a href="#">OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDCentre</a> or call Ottawa Public Health at 613-580-6744 for information about getting tested.</li> <li>• Employers must ensure that their employees are aware of the <a href="#">benefits/pay available</a> to them, should they need to self-isolate due to COVID-19.</li> <li>• In addition to the above requirements, consider updating your business policies for managing staff member absences and for backfilling shifts in case of absence.</li> </ul> <p><b>How to perform customer screening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform a passive screening of customers prior to entering the business and do not permit entry if they have COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days.</li> <li>• Consider using the <a href="#">Self Screening Poster</a> at the door to encourage self-screening.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attendance Log and Reporting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain an attendance log for employees, including start and end times of their shifts.</li> <li>• Ottawa Public Health has made available a COVID-19 <a href="#">Workplace Staff Log</a> to collect this information.</li> <li>• Maintain an attendance log for customers/clients if prescribed in the regulation.</li> <li>• Patron information is confidential and must be retained by the business for at least 30 days. The information may only be released to a Medical Officer of Health or a Public Health Inspector by request under the <a href="#">Health Protection and Promotion Act</a> for a purpose specified in Section 2 of that Act, or as otherwise required by law.</li> <li>• If two (2) or more people in your workplace test positive for COVID-19 (e.g. two or more cases) within 14 days, you must immediately notify Ottawa Public Health at <a href="#">613-580-2424 ext. 26325</a></li> <li>• Please note that reporting cases to OPH is not a punitive measure, it will in fact help OPH react proactively to control COVID-19 cases in the workplace and work with the business to prevent closures.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Physical Distancing and Line Management</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure <a href="#">physical distancing</a> of at least 2 metres between staff and customers.</li> <li>• Modify the layout and use signage to encourage one-way traffic flow and to ensure enough space is provided for staff and customers to maintain physical distancing.</li> <li>• Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas and places where people may gather.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Monitor and manage lines within and outside the facility.</li> <li>• Post <a href="#">physical distancing signage</a> at all entrances, service desks or other high visibility locations.</li> <li>• Place visual/textural markers spaced 2.6 metres apart (e.g., tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and to guide customers.</li> <li>• Physical distancing must be maintained for people lined up outside of the establishment.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of masks/face coverings for customers waiting/lining-up outside (masks are mandatory indoors).</li> <li>• Assign staff to monitor lines and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep at least 2 metres apart.</li> <li>• Consider pre-order/pick-up/delivery models to limit interactions, if possible or required for your business.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Capacity and Gathering Limits</b></p>	<p>Capacity limits refer to the maximum number of people allowed in the place while allowing for physical distancing of at least 2 metres to be maintained. Gathering limits are provincially mandated for certain types of gatherings including an organized public event, social gathering, or a wedding, a funeral or a religious service, rite or ceremony. <b>You must comply with capacity limits as well as gathering limits at all times.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The owner and/or operator is responsible for determining the specific limit for their venue based on its layout, equipment, structure, traffic flow, the activities hosted, and requirements to maintain physical distance.</li> <li>• Ensure a minimum 2-metre radius per person (i.e., 12.6 square metres).</li> <li>• For information on how to calculate your capacity limit, please see <a href="#">Considerations for Capacity Limit</a>.</li> <li>• The specific occupancy limit for your establishment should be posted and clearly visible in all areas of the space, such as near entrances, exits, seating areas and washrooms.</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitor capacity and gathering limits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the number of people based on calculations above and do not exceed the gathering limits.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Stagger arrivals and departures, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Shopping malls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All stores within the mall must comply with requirements regarding capacity limits.</li> <li>• Physical distancing of 2 metres must be maintained by patrons and staff in common areas, stores, washrooms, hallways, entrances, etc. at all times.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Masks and Face Coverings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City of Ottawa has introduced a <a href="#">Temporary Mandatory Mask by-law</a> requiring that masks be worn indoors and in some outdoor situations.</li> <li>• Businesses must have the <a href="#">mandatory mask poster</a> at the front of the store in a visible place.</li> <li>• It is strongly encouraged to wear a mask outdoors where physical distancing may be challenging or impossible.</li> <li>• The mask should cover the mouth, nose and chin and ideally have <a href="#">3 layers</a>.</li> <li>• Business owners and operators must develop a policy and protocols on the <a href="#">wearing of masks</a>, as per the City of Ottawa by-law, and train staff on the policy and protocols.</li> <li>• It is the responsibility of the business or workplace to ensure that anyone <i>not</i> wearing a mask if given a verbal reminder to do so.</li> <li>• Signage reminding customers to wear a mask must be posted at every public entrance/exit, as per the City of Ottawa by-law.</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Letter of Instruction</a> issued by Dr. Vera Etches strongly recommends that employees wear a mask at all times, including in staff only spaces and when they are more than 2 metres apart.</li> <li>• There are <a href="#">exemptions</a>, including (but not limited to) children under 2 years of age and individuals with medical conditions.</li> <li>• Plastic face shields alone are NOT equivalent to wearing a mask.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hand hygiene</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As per the City of Ottawa <a href="#">by-law</a>, alcohol-based hand sanitizer with greater than 60% alcohol is available at all public entrances/exits.</li> <li>• All individuals should be encouraged to <a href="#">perform hand hygiene</a> when entering and leaving the premises.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Protective Equipment, Including Eye Protection</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employer must determine what PPE is required and ensure that it is worn by workers.</li> <li>• Educate staff on the <a href="#">proper use and disposal of masks</a> and PPE.</li> <li>• 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wash your hands properly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before you put on gloves.</li> <li>○ Do not touch your face or mask with your gloves on.</li> <li>○ 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.</li> <li>○ Do not re-use gloves that are made for one use</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <a href="#">Protective eyewear</a> is required if a worker needs to come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering, and not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Cleaning and Disinfection</b></p>	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Clean and disinfect these surfaces often. Refer to OPH’s <a href="#">cleaning and disinfection checklist</a>.</li> <li>• Refer to Health Canada’s <a href="#">list of hard surface disinfectants</a> for use against COVID-19.</li> <li>• Follow manufacturer’s instructions on any products being used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ properly prepare solutions;</li> <li>○ allow adequate contact time for disinfectant to kill germs (see product label);</li> <li>○ wear gloves when handling cleaning products, including wipes;</li> <li>○ wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer;</li> <li>○ do not mix different cleaning or disinfecting products;</li> <li>○ in addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Transactions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible, encourage patrons to pay by debit or credit card (tap if possible).</li> <li>• Staff should wipe the machine and use sanitizer immediately after each interaction.</li> <li>• Staff may choose to wear gloves. If they do so, they should practice proper glove use.</li> <li>• All cashiers should have hand sanitizer at their cash.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adapting Equipment and Logistics</b></p>	<p>Consider changes to the equipment and logistical systems used at your business to enhance the ability of staff members and patrons to protect one another from COVID-19. Such changes may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using chalkboard, electronic, web-based, disposable or other non-contact or single-use menu formats.</li> <li>• Installing automatic, no-touch devices such as doors, faucets and lights.</li> <li>• Accepting patrons by reservation only to minimize line ups and/or crowds.</li> <li>• Limiting payment methods to credit and/or debit, where possible.</li> <li>• Supplying hand sanitizer at all entrances, exits and other high traffic areas.</li> <li>• Refreshing staff training and education on proper <a href="#">hand hygiene</a>.</li> </ul> <p>Remember to include staff office areas, break rooms and other non-public areas of the establishment when adapting your space for operation. These areas should also allow for physical distance, traffic control and other key preventive measures meant to protect staff from illness.</p>
<p><b>Heating and ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.</li> <li>• Increase outdoor air-exchange by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or</li> <li>○ Opening windows and doors, if it is safe to do so.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.</li> <li>• Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.</li> <li>• When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.</li> <li>• Portable fans may be used in the summer, as long as the air is directed outside of the building.</li> <li>• 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, and for proper maintenance.</li> <li>• For more information, review the <a href="#">COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Staff Training and Education</b>	<p>It is essential that all staff members receive training and education on all modified and new policies, procedures and practices prior to working directly with patrons and colleagues. Ottawa Public Health recommends that employers pay close attention to ensuring that all staff working have current training on and are familiar with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19</li> <li>• Actions to take if they experience symptoms of illness</li> <li>• Proper use of approved cleaning and disinfecting products</li> <li>• Cleaning protocols to sanitize reusable items between uses</li> <li>• Procedures for environmental cleaning</li> <li>• How to properly wear and use masks and face coverings</li> <li>• How to properly use gloves, face shields and other personal protective equipment if required by the employer</li> <li>• Maintaining physical distance of at least 2 metres when possible.</li> </ul> <p>Information and resources are available through <a href="#">Ottawa Public Health</a> to help support staff learning and training.</p>
<b>Consider at-risk populations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider dedicating the first hour of in-store operations for customers who are older adults, or for those with underlying medical conditions in order to further limit their possible exposure to COVID-19, and to provide a safer shopping experience.</li> </ul>

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