



# Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



## HOW YOU CAN SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

### Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

### Stay at Home and Physically Distance

Stay at home whenever you can. Maintain 2 meters distance from those outside of your household.

## COVID-19 Guidance to Retail Food and Grocery Stores

March 28, 2020

As we continue our efforts to manage and contain the COVID-19 pandemic, retail food and grocery stores play an [essential service](#) in every community by ensuring safe and reliable access to food, supplies and other provisions.

At the same time, it is crucial that everyone – including the grocery and retail sector – adjust how they operate to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19. This guidance document outlines key steps to put in place, and provides advice and help interpreting the recent public health orders.

Many retail food and grocery stores owners have asked whether or not the [Order prohibiting mass gatherings of 50 or more people](#) applies to them. While this order does not apply directly to the retail food and grocery industry, the spirit of the order should be followed. This means that, for example, in large grocery stores where it is feasible to have more than 50 people, while still following appropriate physical distancing, it is acceptable to have over 50 people present at one time. It is also important to ensure that physical distancing is maintained for customers who might be waiting in line outside the store (ie, waiting to enter).

### TO HELP PREVENT COVID-19 VIRUS TRANSMISSION, OPERATORS OF RETAIL FOOD AND GROCERY STORES SHOULD:

- Enhance the premise's sanitation plan and schedule, and ensure staff are practicing proper hygiene. This includes frequent hand washing, coughing or sneezing into an elbow rather than a hand, and avoiding touching one's face.
- Ensure the washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels and that warm running water is available. Antibacterial soap is not required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Provide clean carry-out bags for purchased food and grocery products. Customers should not use their own containers, reusable bags or boxes.
- Post signs at each check out indicating no customer packaging is to be used or placed on check out counters.



Ministry of Health



BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.

Non-medical inquiries (ex. travel, physical distancing): 1-888-COVID19 (1888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300



- Do NOT sell bulk items, except via gravity feed bins, or where staff dispense the bulk items.
- Place hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% ethyl alcohol in dispensers near doors, pay stations and other high-touch locations for customers and staff use.
- Use a physical queue line controls such as crowd control cordons at entrances and in check out lines outside the stores.
- Place markers such as tape or cones every 2 metres to provide customers with visible queues that support physical distancing.
- Consider placing alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers near doors, payment stations and other high-touch locations for customer and staff use, and making wipes and trash bins available for wiping shopping carts and disposing of the wipes.
- Have clear signs in multiple locations that indicate the maximum number of customers and staff a store can accommodate at any one time.
- Consider monitoring the number of customers and staff entering and leaving the store. Once the maximum number of persons for a store is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Offer online or telephone food and grocery orders with delivery or pick up services as alternatives to shopping in person.
- Clean high touch surfaces such as pay stations, bagging areas and carts or hand baskets between each customer and use and encourage tap payment over pin pad use.
- Limit the handling of credit cards and loyalty cards wherever possible, by allowing customers to scan. There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 can be passed on to others by touching or handling cash.
- Employees who handle cash or credit card must wash their hands frequently with soap and water. This includes before any breaks, at the end of their shift, and before preparing food.
- Should operators and employees choose to use gloves, ensure thorough hand washing before and after each change of gloves.
- Ask customers who arrive with cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms to return home and use a delivery service instead.
- Ensure staff with cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms such as sore throat, fever, sneezing, and coughing remain at home.

### **CALCULATING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN A STORE:**

- A good rule of thumb when calculating a maximum number of persons in a retail or grocery store at any one time is one person per 2 meters squared or 4 square meters of retail floor space.



## GENERAL ADVICE FOR STAFF AND CUSTOMERS ABOUT COVID-19 AND FOR THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE COLD, INFLUENZA, OR FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS:

- The toll-free number for non-medical information related to COVID-19, such as travel recommendations and physical distancing is 1-888-COVID19. Texts can also be sent to 604-630-0300.
- Persons experiencing cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms should self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days after symptoms begin and until symptoms including fever resolve.
- The BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool can be found at <https://covid19.thrive.health>. Encourage those with questions call 8-1-1 and seek appropriate medical advice.
- Our BC COVID-19 app is available at  
iPhone: <https://apps.apple.com/ca/app/BC-COVID-19-Support/id1502907052>  
Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ca.bc.gov.health.hlbc.COVID19>

For more information, see <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/employers-businesses/food-businesses> .

Employers should reassess their work environment every day and keep updated with the information posted on the Province's website: [www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19](http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVID19)

March 28, 2020  
COVID-19 Guidance to Grocery Stores

