

# Guidelines for Grocery Stores: Minimizing the Spread of COVID-19

May 15, 2020

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Governor Jay Inslee issued a [“Stay Home - Stay Healthy” order](#) in Washington state on March 23, 2020. The order will last for a minimum of two weeks. The order requires every Washingtonian to stay at home, except for specific situations. The exceptions include people going to work at an [essential business](#).

As an essential business, grocery stores can play an important role in protecting their employees and customers from COVID-19 by following these recommended personal and environmental hygiene practices.

- **Apply the social distancing recommendations to any lines that form inside or outside of the store.** In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools for checks and lines. Put tape on the floor to keep customers adequately spaced.
- **Prohibit self-serve foods**, including hot bars, cold bars and buffets.
- **Prohibit product sampling.**
- **Appoint a designated sanitation worker** at all times to continuously clean and sanitize commonly touched surfaces and meet the environmental cleaning guidelines set by the [CDC](#).
- **Conduct daily checks for symptoms of illness** and ensure employees stay home when they are sick.
- **Ensure that employees practice washing their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water** for 20 seconds upon first arriving to work, after using the restroom, before and after eating and frequently throughout the day. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Provide alcohol based (60%) hand sanitizers** for use for both employees and customers by placing them at convenient/accessible locations. Ensure there is a way to sanitize shopping cart and basket handles – either by making wipes easily accessible to customers or by having employees manage the process and sanitize between each customer use.
- **Frequently sanitize commonly touched surfaces and objects** such as electronics, door knobs, faucet handles, counter tops, cash machine key pads, shopping cart handles frequently throughout the day. Change the sanitizing solution at least once every four hours.
- **Consider temporarily assigning employees at high risk for coronavirus to non-public-contact duties**, such as people with underlying health conditions, people 60 or older, people with underlying health conditions, those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant.
- **Offer designated shopping hours for customers at high risk**, including people with underlying health conditions, people 60 or older, people with underlying health conditions, those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant.
- **Prominently display signage in the store** that communicates with customers and staff the steps being taken to minimize the risk of COVID-19. Download resources [here](#).

If you are a food business owner or a food worker and have questions related to your operation please reach out to your Environmental Health Investigator or call 206-263-9566 to speak with office staff. For the latest information, please visit the following site: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/coronavirus>.