

Retail Guidance

Updated 3/13/2020

This guidance applies to retail businesses and service operators such as grocery stores; drug stores, movie theaters; restaurants, and other retail establishments.

Today Public Health – Seattle & King County announced new recommendations to slow the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in addition to earlier guidance. Retail service may continue throughout King County; and it is recommended that the following public health guidance is observed in these settings.

Based on [CDC guidance](#), retail and service operators, along with all workplaces, should take the following steps to help stop or slow the spread of COVID-19. An overview of workplace guidance is below and additional details follow:

[Overview of workplace guidance for the Seattle area and King County, WA from the CDC:](#)

1. Encourage staff to telework
2. Expand sick leave policies
3. Implement social distancing measures, e.g.:
 - Spacing workers at the worksite
 - Staggering work schedules
 - Decreasing social contacts in the workplace (limit in-person meetings)
 - All break areas must accommodate distancing with regular disinfection of all eating surfaces
4. Eliminate large work-related gatherings (e.g., staff meetings, after-work functions)
5. Postpone non-essential work travel
6. Monitor for illness in the workplace and encourage self-screening for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) (for example; ask staff to check temperature before coming to work, have no-touch thermometer onsite if needed)
7. Implement extended telework arrangements (when feasible)
8. Ensure flexible leave policies for staff who need to stay home due to school/childcare dismissals and to encourage individuals to stay home if they are sick.
9. Cancel work-sponsored conferences, tradeshow, etc.

[In alignment with the CDC guidance, Public Health – Seattle & King County is offering additional details about how to reduce the spread of COVID-19.](#)

We now encourage employees, onsite contractors and customers to...

- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Promote tap and pay to limit handling of cash
- Create new habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly

- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

We encourage businesses, including retail and service operators, to think creatively about how to avoid crowding, which could include:

- Use booking and scheduling to stagger customer flow
- Use online transactions where possible
- Follow guidance about limiting attendance at larger gatherings, including managing ingress, egress, and lines within the establishment

For transportation businesses, taxis, and ride shares

- Keep windows open when possible
- Increase ventilation
- Regularly disinfect surfaces

Handle food carefully

- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen [health screening for staff](#) who handle food directly and their close workplace contacts
- Ensure staff who handle food directly and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

Employees and customers should stay home when sick

- Encourage, and provide supportive and flexible leave policies when possible, so that employees, onsite contractors, customers and clients stay home if they are feeling sick and/or if they have a sick family member in their home
- Place posters and other signage that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your establishment and in other nearby areas where they are likely to be seen by customers and clients.

Encourage social distancing

- Where possible, limit distance between employees, onsite contractors, customers and clients to no less than 6 feet if contact will be 10 minutes or longer.
- Consider signage to promote social distancing/prevention messaging.

Employees and customers should cover coughs and sneezes and clean hands

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees, onsite contractors, clients and customers.
- Employees and contractors should clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty.
- Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace for employees and onsite contractors. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.

- Visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands webpage](#) for more information.
- Provide disposable wipes to customers, so they can clean carts and hand baskets before each use.

Perform routine environmental cleaning:

- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label. Frequency of cleaning should be reasonably based on the number of people in the retail establishment.
- For disinfection, review this list of [products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#), maintained by the American Chemistry Council Center for Biocide Chemistries (CBC). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
- Provide disposable wipes or similar cleaning supplies so that commonly touched surfaces (for example, carts, cash machine key pads, doorknobs, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by retail establishment employees or cleaning service vendors before each use.

Specific to restaurants and grocery stores:

Food has not been identified as a likely source of COVID-19 at this time; however, food businesses can play an important role in both protecting their employees and their customers from COVID-19 by following the routine food establishment personal and environmental hygiene practices identified below:

- **Request staff and onsite contractors to self-screen for [COVID-19 symptoms](#)** before coming to the establishment.
- **Wash your 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.
- **If soap and water are not available** provide alcohol based (60%) hand sanitizers for use for both employees and customers by placing them at convenient/accessible locations.
- Use sanitizing solution (i.e., one teaspoon of unscented household bleach in a gallon of cool water, there is no need to change the ratio of bleach to water to kill the coronavirus. If in doubt, please follow the instructions on the bottle) to **frequently sanitize commonly touched surfaces and objects** such as cash machine key pads, counter tops, dining tables door knobs, electronics, faucet handles, and menus frequently throughout the day. Change the chlorine-based sanitizing solution at least once every four hours.
- **Ensure dishwasher and/or three-compartment sinks are used properly and have the appropriate level of sanitizer** for final rinse (50-100 PPM chlorine-based sanitizer, follow product label for other approved sanitizers).
- **Ensure sneeze guards are in place** where required.
- If you have food [employees at higher risk for COVID-19](#) with underlying health conditions, such as people 60 or older, people with underlying health conditions (heart disease, lung disease, or

diabetes) or those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant: **consider temporarily re-assigning** them to non-public-contact duties.

Sources and relevant resources:

- [Seattle Community Mitigation](#), CDC
- [CDC website for symptoms](#)
- [Resources for large community events and mass gatherings](#), CDC
- [Get Your Community- and Faith-Based Organizations Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019](#), CDC
- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#), CDC
- [Recommendations to minimize the spread of Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in retail food establishments](#), Public Health — Seattle & King County