

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Retail Businesses

05/07/2021

This guidance applies to all business and places of public accommodation (“businesses”)—as defined by Executive Order 21-11, as amended by Executive Order 21-21 (“EO”)—operating retail establishments, including but not limited to department stores, shopping malls, auto parts stores, sporting goods stores, home improvement and hardware stores, computer and electronics stores, clothing stores, furniture stores, auto dealerships, bookstores, toy and hobby stores, flower and gift shops, rental equipment businesses, and other outlet stores. This guidance applies from Friday, May 7, 2021 at 12 p.m. (noon) through May 27, 2021. Businesses must continue to follow all other applicable [Stay Safe Industry Guidance \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp). The EO requires all businesses to have and implement a written COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that addresses EO requirements and applicable Stay Safe Industry Guidance. For more information about Plan requirements, see the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities webpage \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).

- ✓ Food and beverages may be offered for on-site consumption if the establishment complies with all requirements found in [Guidance for Restaurants and Bars \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf).
- ✓ Businesses that provide recreational and amusement services or offer recreational or entertainment facilities, activities, events, attractions, must follow the requirements set forth in the [Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).

Recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets, so the risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather with other households. Several key strategies can reduce the risk of getting sick or transmitting COVID-19:

- ✓ Wear a well-fitting face covering. See [Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html).
- ✓ Keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from other households and wash hands often.

- ✓ Get tested. See [COVID-19 Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for information about who should get tested and how to get a test.
- ✓ Stay home if you are sick or were exposed to COVID-19. See [If You Are Sick: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html) and [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf).
- ✓ Get vaccinated. See the [MDH COVID-19 Vaccine webpage \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).
- ✓ Work from home. Working from home is strongly recommended and businesses are strongly encouraged to allow employees to work from home when possible. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations as required under existing federal and state law. Employers are strongly encouraged to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with one or more members of their household who have underlying medical conditions and who are unable to be vaccinated.

Required COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Sections

Follow the requirements in the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp) and the following:

1. [Use of face coverings](#)
2. [Maintain social distance between people indoors](#)
3. [For customers using drop-off, pick-up, and delivery services](#)
4. [For customers who shop inside stores](#)
5. [For retail shopping malls and large retail stores](#)

Requirements and Recommendations

1. Use of face coverings

Requirements

- ✓ Require workers to wear face coverings indoors and wear face coverings outdoors when social distancing of 6 feet cannot be maintained.
- ✓ Establish procedures for overseeing workers' compliance with these requirements and make reasonable efforts to ensure customers and visitors comply.

2. Maintain social distance of at least 6 feet between people indoors

Requirements

- ✓ For all indoor areas, reduce the number of people in the area if needed to ensure at least 6 feet of social distancing between all workers, customers, clients, and visitors.
- ✓ Set up the indoor space, configuration, and flow throughout the establishment to allow for 6 feet of social distancing by all workers, customers, clients, and visitors.
- ✓ For indoor areas, mark all check-out areas and other areas of congestion to provide for social distancing of at least 6 feet, including on the floor, lane lines, and areas where customers may be waiting to enter a business.

Recommendations

- Indoor retail establishments must establish methods to decrease worker and customer contact and the duration of customers' stay in the establishment. Examples of options include, but are not limited to:
 - Offering virtual services or contactless delivery and encouraging their use as much as possible;
 - Offering curbside or pre-order pick-up and encouraging their use as much as possible;
- Encouraging customers to shop during off-peak hours if they have to visit in person;
- Encouraging customers to, when possible, limit in-person visits to one person per household.
- Retail workers who are engaged in a consultative role should do so in a virtual manner whenever possible to limit contact with customers.
- Interactions in the retail setting should be limited to brief, transient interactions that pose a lower risk of transmission.
- Encourage advanced reservations/registration/purchases for customers, clients, and visitors (e.g., online, app-based, email, will-call).
- Limit or restrict areas within the business that are accessible by clients, customers, or visitors.
- Post signage so that current and potential customers, clients, and visitors are aware of service changes due to COVID-19.

3. For customers using drop-off, pick-up, and delivery services

Requirements

- ✓ Ensure that drop-off, pick-up, or delivery services allow for at least 6 feet of distance between the worker and customer while indoors.

Recommendations

- Allow customers to pre-order goods, pre-arrange the maintenance or repair of goods, or pre-arrange pet grooming services before traveling to the business.
- Schedule timing of outdoor drop-off, pick-up, and delivery and communicate arrival at the drop-off, pick-up, or delivery location through voice, text, or email messaging.

4. For customers who shop inside stores

Requirements

- ✓ Provide hand sanitizer at the entrance, point of purchase, and prominent locations for customers/clients.

Recommendation

- If appointments or consultations are necessary to be completed in person, the duration of the appointment must be limited to the minimum amount of time to complete the required interaction. All attempts should be made to limit in person interaction. Physical distancing and masking must be maintained at all times while interacting.
- Post instructions for customers or clients at entrances, and inform customers/clients:
 - Not to enter if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
 - About the facility's occupancy limits.
 - About hygiene, physical distancing requirements, face covering requirements.
- Customers are strongly encouraged to limit their time in establishments and to minimize contact time with workers.

5. For retail shopping malls and large retail stores

Requirements

- ✓ Indoor seating may be offered as long it allows for social distancing and does not create a point of congregation. Follow the requirements for maintaining social distance between people indoors in the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).
- ✓ Each food court and restaurant seating area must comply with the [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Requirements for Restaurants and Bars \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf), including indoor capacity requirements. For indoor areas:
 - If the area is undefined then the Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division Occupant Load Determination for Bars & Restaurants [Minnesota Department of Public Safety State Fire Marshal Division Occupant Load Determination for Bars & Restaurants \(dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/Documents/Occupancy-Load-Bars-Restaurants.pdf\)](https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/sfm/Documents/Occupancy-Load-Bars-Restaurants.pdf) must be used to determine the occupancy.
 - For seating areas that do not have a defined boundary, the responsible business or entity must establish a boundary by using ropes, stanchions, or similar measures to control occupancy in the area.
 - The responsible business or entity must institute measures to control capacity or social distancing (e.g., by marking seats or tables as unavailable, or by actively monitoring entrances and exits).

COVID-19 RETAIL BUSINESSES

- ✓ Entertainment attractions (e.g., play areas, exhibits, rides, etc.) may operate if they comply with the requirements for entertainment and meeting venues in the applicable [Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).
 - For indoor entertainment, the business or entity responsible for overseeing these entertainment attractions must institute measures to control capacity and ensure social distancing. If an entertainment attraction does not have a defined boundary, the responsible business or entity must establish a boundary by using ropes, stanchions, or similar measures to control occupancy in the area.
- ✓ Mobile and ambulatory equipment rental (e.g., carts, strollers, etc.) is allowed. Follow the requirements for cleaning and disinfecting included in the [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).

