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Guidance for Businesses Operating during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Plan now to make your business as safe as possible. As businesses reopen pursuant to Stage 2, we do not know if further guidelines from the state or federal agencies to prevent COVID-19 spread will be given. However, this set of guidelines, which apply to essential businesses as well as those opening under Stage 2, can be used to make business operation as safe as possible for employees and customers. The more of these strategies a business can implement the lower the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The most important means to reduce transmission is to ensure 'social distancing', keeping people six feet apart from each other.

Coronavirus Disease 2019, or COVID-19, is the disease caused by a virus (SARS-CoV2) that emerged in China at the end of last year. COVID-19 is spread by droplets that can be sneezed, coughed, or exhaled by infected persons. These droplets can travel up to about six feet from an infected person and inhaled by another person. Once that person has inhaled the virus, it takes about two to fourteen days for that person to have symptoms. It is also possible for a person to spread the virus without showing symptoms. To decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19, it is important to modify business practices to decrease transmission. These can include social distancing, cleaning, screening for illness, and other measures that decrease contact.

Ensure sufficient space for people to socially distance:

- A reasonable guide to determine the number of customers that can be in a retail business at any given time is one half of the Fire Marshal's posted maximum occupancy. For restaurants, one half of the routine seating capacity would be appropriate with every other table kept vacant to facilitate social distancing.
- Have a means to ensure that the number of customers in the building does not exceed that number. This may be done by assigning an employee to monitor the entry door, allowing an equal number of customers to enter and exit.
- At entrances and waiting areas, select an area outside where customers can wait to ensure social distancing. This area should allow for persons/families to remain six feet apart. These distances can be marked with tape or paint in that area.
- Alternatively, businesses may find other mechanisms to ensure social distancing, such as having customers wait in their cars or by having business by appointment only.
- Create flow patterns in the business that increase social distancing.
 - Allow people to depart and enter such that they don't pass each other in the doorway.
 - Establish one-way aisles that allow for 6 feet of distance between customers in each aisle; establish markings on floors to remind people of how far apart they should be standing.

Implement the following cleaning and sanitizing strategies:

- Provide disinfectant wipes and/or hand sanitizer at the entrance and exit for customer use.
- Ensure that employees can perform frequent hand hygiene either through handwashing (preferred) or the use of hand sanitizer.
- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, counters, and doorknobs.
- Avoid the use of shared telephones, pens, keyboards and similar items.
- Assign employees to disinfect carts and baskets as they are used.

Keeping your Employees and Customers Safe:

- Screen your employees for COVID-19 illness symptoms. These include:
 - A new or worsening cough
 - New or worsening shortness of breath
 - A fever, either measured or feeling feverish
- If any of these are positive or the employee is otherwise ill, they should stay home for at least 10 days after onset of symptoms and for 72 hours after cessation of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, or until released to return to work by a medical provider.
- Employees having close contact with customers or other employees should wear cloth masks to prevent them from making one another or vulnerable customers ill. IF masks are being worn, train your employees in techniques used to safely put them on and take them off.
- Train your employees in proper techniques for donning and doffing of gloves if they are wearing them; gloves should not be used in place of good hand washing.
- Screen your customers for COVID-19 illness symptoms, as above, before they enter your business. This can be accomplished by posting a sign at the entrance notifying customers that they should not enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Give your employees opportunities to wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Have employees place all purchased items in new bags. If customers want to use their own bags, customers should bag their own goods and bags should be left in the shopping cart.

Other ideas to consider:

- Consider providing delivery services, especially to at risk persons.
- Take mobile drive through orders, especially for at risk individuals.
- Utilize partitions to separate employees and the public.
- When possible, allow for employees to work remotely.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other non-contact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit the [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#) and [clean hands](#) webpage for more information.
- Maintain daily rosters of employees and when possible include hours that employees are at specific worksites. This will facilitate Public Health contacting employees if a fellow employee or customer becomes ill. Retain these records for at least 14 days in case they are needed to trace contacts.
- Where feasible, maintain records of clients and customers, to be retained for 14 days.
- Grocery: Have employees bag groceries and bring them out to cars. Post a list of “out of stock” items outside the store so individuals do not have to come in unnecessarily.