COVID-19 INFORMATION
GUIDANCE FOR GROCERY STORES

Overview
This document should be used to support grocery store operators in reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Grocery store operators must follow public health orders by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, particularly Order 18-2020 and Order 19-2020, along with the Workplace Guidance for Business Owners and Guidance for Retail Businesses.

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

| Public Areas | 
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| Ensure customers are aware of store rules by posting signs in high-visibility locations, including signs that outline: | 
| o physical distancing requirements (2 metres) | 
| o prohibitions on attendance by sick or isolating patrons | 
| o hand hygiene | 
| o coughing and sneezing etiquette | 
| o cleaning and disinfection practices | 
| o store rules, for example: | 
| - capacity and/or shopping hours, | 
| - any limits on the number of shoppers per household, and | 
| - restrictions around personal items (reusable bags, to-go cups or travel mugs). | 
| Provide a hand washing station with soap and paper towels or hand sanitizer, with at least 60% alcohol content, at entrances and exits. | 
| Ensure patrons are able to maintain physical distancing requirements of 2 metres. Options to achieve this include: | 
| o Designating workers to monitor how many customers enter and leave. | 
| o Controlling traffic flow within the store. | 
| o Directing traffic through aisles and around stations. Consider establishing one-way pathways. | 
| o Encouraging customers to limit their time in the store. | 
| Consider reminding customers to stay 2 metres away from each other by: | 
| o Making announcements at regular intervals over store speaker, | 
| o Having signage throughout the store (for example, make safety markings on store floors), and/or | 
| o Employing staff to facilitate physical distancing throughout the store and lineups. | 
| Shift stocking activities to off-peak or after hours, when possible, to reduce staff contact with customers. | 
| o If possible, notify customers of store rules in advance through updated websites or by email. Setting expectations in advance can facilitate compliance with the rules and reduce the likelihood of disputes about the rules at the store. |
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- Consider designating specific time slots in which only vulnerable customers – such as the elderly or immunocompromised – can access the store.
  - Choose times at the start of the day, when the store is freshly cleaned, for these customers.
- Consider offering and promoting online shopping options in combination with delivery or pick-up.
  - Ensure measures are taken to reduce the risk of transmission associated with home delivery or curbside pickup services.

### Staff-only Areas

- Stagger worker arrival/departure times, lunchtimes, breaks and meetings to minimize the number of workers in one place.
- Designate lockers, storage spaces or tools for each worker.
  - If tools or equipment must be shared, ensure they are cleaned and disinfected after each user.
- Set up delivery or loading bay procedures that support physical distancing as well as enhanced hygiene and cleaning practices.
- Post signs that remind staff in the store about hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
  - Wash hands often, with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and running water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol content).
  - Refrain from touching your face, mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.
  - Sneeze or cough into your elbow or a tissue, then immediately dispose of the tissue and wash or sanitize hands.

### Purchases

- Take precautions at the point of sale to reduce transmission. Options include:
  - Physically distancing cashiers from patrons or installing physical barriers.
  - Creating markers to indicate where shoppers should stand while waiting in line to maintain physical distance.
  - Spacing out cash counters and self-service checkouts.
- Cashiers should sanitize their workspace and clean their hands often.
  - Pay extra attention to sanitizing surfaces touched by the customer, such as touchscreen or payment keypads.
  - Follow store procedures if customers are using their own reusable shopping bags or bins.
- Have the customers keep their bags or bins in their cart and pack their own groceries.
- Be sure to clean their hands if they touch the customer’s bags or bins.
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- Encourage customers to use debit or credit cards and touchless payment when it is possible. If cash must be accepted:
  - Designate specific terminals for cash payments.
  - Ensure that:
    - cash is securely stored and minimally handled, and
    - all workers who handle it wash and/or sanitize their hands immediately afterwards.
- Discourage customers from touching goods. Options include:
  - Posting “Please buy what you touch” signs throughout the store.
  - Limiting the amount of stock on shelves at a given time.
  - Letting customers know to ask for items if a shelf is empty but the item is not marked as out-of-stock.
  - Removing items and areas that can’t be easily cleaned, such as newspapers, magazines and flyers, demo or sample stations, and snack bars or complimentary food and beverage stations.
  - Closing or emptying self-serve bulk items and food stations.
  - Displaying product information, such as package contents, with product.
- Adjust or suspend returns policy to ensure potentially contaminated goods cannot be restocked.

### Cleaning and Disinfection

- In addition to the cleaning and disinfection guidance found in the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](https://www.gov.ab.ca), grocery store operators should:
  - Clean high-traffic areas and high-touch surfaces more frequently.
  - Clean and disinfect carts, baskets and checkouts (self-serve or staffed) after each use.
  - Have a clearly designated drop off area for used carts and baskets.
  - Keep washrooms (staff and public) clean and well-stocked with soap and paper towels.
  - Provide ample waste disposal options in both public and staff-only areas of the store.
  - Line waste containers with plastic bags for safer garbage disposal.
  - Consider reducing store hours or scheduling closure days to deep clean the entire store.
- Use disposable gloves when performing higher risk activities such handling garbage or using disinfectants to clean carts and baskets.
- Make sure workers are properly trained on the safe use and disposal of gloves, including how to put them on and take them off safely.
### Uniforms and Masks

- If uniforms are provided, ensure that they are laundered by a laundry service provider or encourage workers to wash their work clothes as soon as possible after shift.
- Allow staff to **wear masks** if preferred, even if a mask is not necessary for the work they are performing.
  - Masks may prevent the wearer from spreading the virus.
  - Masks should only be used in addition to other control measures.
- Anyone wearing a non-medical face mask should:
  - wash or sanitize hands just before putting it on, before taking it off, and again after taking it off,
  - make sure it fits well (doesn’t gape),
  - keep it clean and safely stored, for personal use only (no sharing),
  - take the mask home and launder after each shift.