

Preparedness Plan Requirements Guidelines – Grocery and Convenience Stores

Businesses involving grocery stores and convenience stores include, but are not limited to, grocery stores, supermarkets, retail food-outlets, wholesale clubs, convenience stores, and gas-stations.

As required by Executive Orders issued by Governor Tim Walz under the Peacetime Emergency, businesses in this sector must develop and implement COVID-19 Preparedness Plans that address the hazards of COVID-19 transmission at the workplace. Businesses must address all the guidance requirements applicable to their workplace in their COVID-19 Preparedness Plans and as set out in each of the components below. Unless clearly indicated that an action included in the guidance is recommended, businesses should understand that the action is required, if applicable to their business. Businesses must ensure the plan is evaluated, monitored, executed, and updated under the supervision of a designated plan administrator. Employers must ensure the plan is posted at all the business's workplaces in readily accessible locations that will allow for the plan to be readily reviewed by all workers, as required. Posting may be accomplished through electronic dissemination of the plan as long as workers have access to means to review the electronic posting.

Worker protections and protocols for all workplaces

For the purposes of this guidance, a “worker” includes all persons performing work for the business. All persons, including employees, subcontractors, independent contractors, associates, team members, vendors, delivery-personnel, contract, temporary, part-time and seasonal workers, however categorized, who are performing work at the workplace or performing work for the business, are required to be included in the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. All workers must be properly trained on and adhere to the business's policies, protocols, and practices as outlined within this guidance.

Ensure sick workers stay home

1. Establish health screening protocols for workers at the start of each shift (e.g. health screening survey, taking temperature). See the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH)

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Visitor and Worker Health Screening Checklist

(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf). The checklist is also available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish

(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html).

2. Workers with COVID-19 symptoms should be sent home immediately. If they cannot be sent home immediately, isolate in a closed room until they can be sent home. Workers who have been in close contact with a household member with COVID-19 should not be at work until their quarantine period is finished.
3. Establish communication protocols and steps to take when workers have been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace. If a worker is confirmed to have COVID-19, inform fellow workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 at the worksite while maintaining confidentiality as required (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html).
4. Designate an individual to maintain communication with and gather information from workers who may be ill to ensure the privacy of workers is maintained.
5. Establish worker sickness reporting protocols.
6. Establish protocols for workers to return to work after isolation or quarantine and follow MDH guidance (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf).
7. Establish a process to identify contact between infected workers and other workers who may have been exposed ([CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020 www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)).
8. Evaluate and adjust sick leave policies to reflect the need for isolation and quarantine and to create incentives for workers who are sick to stay home.
9. Provide accommodations for “high risk” and vulnerable populations. See CDC’s People Who are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html). Vulnerable workers should be encouraged to self-identify and employers should avoid making unnecessary medical inquiries. Employers should take particular care to reduce these workers’ risk of exposure.
10. Clearly communicate sick leave policies to all workers.

Social distancing – Workers must be at least six-feet apart

1. Maximize remote working: Workers who are able to work from home must work from home.
2. Stagger shifts and breaks; extend work hours and create additional shifts to reduce number of workers per shift to prevent congregating in changing rooms, entrance areas, transport areas, health screening areas, and timeclock areas.

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3. Evaluate traffic patterns and “bottle-necks” to reduce crowding at entrances, in hallways, elevators, waiting areas, break areas, locker-areas, restrooms, access points, etc.:
 - Designate one way entrances and exits that facilitate six-foot distancing.
 - If time clocks are in use, consider alternatives such as phone-based apps, web-based apps or cameras to clock workers in and out.
 - Mark out six-foot distances or circles for workers to stand in while they wait to punch in, to conduct health assessments, to perform handwashing, waiting for transportation and in other areas where workers would normally congregate.
4. Avoid having workers facing each other at workstations.
5. Implement cohorting where possible. Have the same 10 workers or less work in the same area on the same shifts.
6. Create and designate additional break areas (including outside, when practical) for breaks and meals. Revise break times to prevent congregating in cafeterias and breakrooms.
 - Spread out or remove table and chairs in break areas so they are at least six feet apart and install barriers where necessary.
 - Remove seating where you do not want workers to congregate.
 - Provide additional trash-receptacles to ensure trash is readily disposed of. Relocate trash-receptacles to minimize workers having to travel longer distances and through areas of congestion. Ensure that trash-receptacles are emptied regularly.
7. Limit numbers in restrooms or at handwashing facilities. Consider adding hand-washing facilities if necessary.
8. Ensure physical distancing in work areas, including at workstations, corridors, concession areas, production lines, cafeterias, break rooms, etc.
 - Isolate workers to certain areas of the facility (zones).
9. Move workstations to promote social distancing. Install plexiglass barriers or stretched plastic on a frame made of non-porous material to provide a protection barrier between workers where social distancing cannot be implemented.
10. Make a six-foot line in front of desk that are used by workers.
11. Limit worker interaction across worksites unless at least six-foot distance is maintained.
 - Use walkie talkies or headphones so workers can communicate from a distance.
12. Pre-plan maintenance activities to minimize having other workers in the area.
13. Ensure there is at least six feet between participants during meetings and trainings or conduct virtual meetings. It is recommended that there are 10 people or less in a meeting.
14. Schedule virtual meetings whenever possible to avoid non-critical business travel.
15. Have in-person meetings only, if it is critical to business operations.

- Before the meeting, send participants a summary of COVID-19 safeguards being employed.
- At the start of the meeting, provide a verbal reminder about what is expected.
- Arrange chairs so participants are at least six feet apart.
- Use the largest meeting room available.
- Limit the number of participants to 10 or fewer.
- Open windows and doors whenever possible to make sure the business is well ventilated.

Worker hygiene and source controls

1. Ensure workers regularly wash their hands. Ensure handwashing and/or hand-sanitizer facilities are readily available and appropriately stocked.
2. Require and allow workers sufficient time to wash their hands frequently, including arrival and departure from the workplace, before and after using the restroom, before eating and drinking, and after touching surfaces that may be contaminated.
3. Provide recommended protective supplies, such as non-medical cloth face coverings, gloves, disinfectant, guards, shields, etc.
4. Post “hand-washing” and “cover your cough” signs.
5. Require the use of source control face coverings (e.g. cloth face coverings).
 - Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use. CDC information on the use of face coverings <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> , including washing instructions and information on how to make homemade face covers.
6. Ensure supplies in restrooms are regularly monitored and continuously stocked.
7. Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching the handles, opening-devices or powered door-operators with the hand, whenever possible. If the door cannot be opened without touching the handle or door-operator with the hand, the business must ensure a trash-receptacle is placed by the door to ensure a paper towel can be readily disposed of when operating the door. The location and positioning of waste-receptacles should not interfere with life safety requirements (e.g. egress, evacuation, emergency equipment) or any reasonable accommodations provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
8. Community drinking stations and water-fountains should not be available or used. Touchless water-filling stations may still be provided.
9. Provide tissues for proper cough or sneeze etiquette and no-touch disposal bins.
10. Ensure workers are laundering work apparel daily. Advise workers to launder according to clothing and detergent instructions.

Workplace building and ventilation protocols

General building conditions: Businesses must assess the status and capacities of the utility-systems within the building (e.g. ventilation, water-supply, sewer, gas), as well as potential issues associated with vermin, molds, and mildew, prior to putting the building into an operational status.

1. Follow established protocols for starting mechanical, electrical, plumbing, life-safety, and other systems after non-use according to the authorities having jurisdiction.
2. Assess the building for indications of pest and vermin infestation and consult a pest-control professional as appropriate.
3. See CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html).

Ventilation system start-up: Businesses must evaluate the operational capacity and increase, improve and maintain ventilation provided throughout the building.

1. Increase the outdoor air-percentage to increase dilution of contaminants, and eliminate recirculating, whenever possible, while maintaining indoor air-conditions.
2. For heating-ventilation-air-conditioning systems that recirculate air, businesses need to improve central-air filtration to at least the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack (at least MERV-14 preferred) and seal the edges of filters to further limit by-pass around the filters.
3. Replace and upgrade air filters prior to re-occupancy.
4. Run systems on full economizer as outside air-conditions allow.
5. Consult an HVAC professional to ensure proper ventilation is maintained.

Day-to-day operations: Once systems are in a safe operational status, businesses should ensure the following practices and protocols are maintained:

1. Continuously maximize fresh-air into the workplace and eliminate air recirculation.
2. Maintain relative humidity levels of RH 40-60%.
3. Keep systems running longer hours (24/7 if possible) to enhance the ability to filter contaminants out of the air.
4. Add a flush cycle to the controls of the HVAC system and run HVAC systems for two-hours before and after occupancy.
5. Check and rebalance the HVAC system to provide negative air-pressure whenever possible.
6. Supplement ventilation-system with the use of portable HEPA filter units whenever possible.

7. Minimize airflow from blowing across people and avoid having fans blow air from one worker onto another.
8. Consult an HVAC professional or the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers to ensure proper ventilation is provided and ventilation-systems are properly maintained. See ASHRAE's COVID-19 Preparedness Resources (www.ashrae.org/technical-resources/resources).

Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocols

1. Establish a documented sanitization schedule and checklist, identifying surfaces or equipment to be sanitized, the agent to be used, and the frequency at which sanitization occurs.
2. Frequently clean and disinfect all areas, such as offices, restrooms, locker and changing rooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment, machinery, tools, controls, etc.
3. Routinely inspect, maintain, clean and disinfect separation barriers and other safeguards.
4. Frequently clean and disinfect all high-touch items, such as doorknobs, countertops, barriers, railings, handles, and other surfaces.
5. Electronic devices (e.g. light-switches, circuit-breakers) should not be sanitized with a liquid agent. Consider covering switches or devices with a poly-covering that allows the user to manipulate the device without touching the switch and change out the poly-covering frequently. Electronic devices must be sanitized only when disconnected from the power-source and cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the listing or labeling requirements.
6. Personal equipment, tools and phones should not be shared or, if shared, should be disinfected after each use.
7. Avoid sharing of tools, writing utensils, keyboards, control buttons, scanners. Any shared items need to be wiped before and after each use.
8. Designate an area for isolating workers who show symptoms of COVID-19 infection, such as a wellness area, isolated first aid station or other area where access can be restricted.
9. Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection after people suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the facility. See CDC's Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html).
 - Close off areas visited by the ill person(s).
 - Increase ventilation in the areas visited by the ill person(s) including opening outside doors and windows in the area.
 - Wait 24 hours or as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
 - Clean and disinfect all areas that may have been accessed or touched by the ill person(s), including IT equipment, such as computers, keyboard, computer mice, etc.;

other commonly touched surfaces; offices, break rooms, restrooms; and vending machines or ATMs.

10. Establish communication protocols and steps to take when workers have been exposed to COVID-19 at the worksite. If a worker is confirmed to have COVID-19, inform fellow workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 at the worksite while maintaining confidentiality as required (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html).
11. Select appropriate and ensure the needed supply of disinfectants – consider effectiveness and safety. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) List N has identified a list of products that meet EPA’s criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2. See EPA’s List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)
12. Review product labels and safety data sheets, follow manufacturer specifications and use required personal protective equipment for the product.

Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol

1. Receive deliveries via a contactless method whenever you can.
2. Businesses must provide for contactless deliveries that promote for delivery at a doorstep, where persons maintain a distance at least six feet away while verifying receipt of the delivery between the worker and the delivery person. Whenever possible, businesses should attempt to do everything electronically (e.g. app, phone) to eliminate the need for close contact between workers and delivery personnel.
3. Ensure equipment, materials, products, and items are being delivered, dropped off or picked up are prescheduled and coordinated. Deliveries, drop-offs, or pick-ups must be performed one load, carrier, or vehicle at a time, and multiple deliveries, drop-offs, or pick-ups should not be performed simultaneously. Delivery personnel must wait in their vehicles if another delivery, drop-off or pick-up is being performed.
4. Workers must maintain a distance six feet or greater from others during interactions while receiving or exchanging deliveries.
5. Workers must minimize the unnecessary exchanging or sharing of scanners, pens, or other tools with delivery personnel.

Communications and training practices and protocol

1. All workers and members of management must be trained regarding COVID-19 exposure, as well as applicable policies, procedures, practices, and protocols. The training must be provided by and paid for by the business. The training must be provided in a manner and language that each worker can understand and must be adjusted to reasonably accommodate all limiting factors present. See "OSHA's Resource for Development and Delivery of Training to Workers (www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3824.pdf). See also Minnesota's "Small Assemblies

for Testing and Training" for guidance with facilitating training for workers while addressing COVID-19 implications (dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID-19_training_facilities.pdf).

2. Businesses must ensure the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is posted at all the business's workplaces in readily accessible locations and is shared with and reviewed by all workers.
3. Businesses must ensure the necessary or required rules and practices are communicated to all workers, and adequately enforce their provisions.
4. Businesses must ensure the necessary or required protocols and practices are communicated to all workers, including temporary, part-time, seasonal and contract workers, and ensure protocols and practices are similarly required by businesses providing temporary, part-time, seasonal and contract workers.
5. Ensure all workers, including temporary, part-time, seasonal and contract workers, are provided with and using personal protective equipment necessary to perform their work.
6. Workers must ensure they comply with and follow established rules and practices.
7. Maintain signage reminding all workers of protections and protocols, including social-distancing, hand-washing, and respiratory-etiquette.

Additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE)

1. Require that all workers routinely wear cloth face masks, face coverings or disposable masks along with the required PPE.
2. Launder reusable face coverings before each daily use. CDC additional information about the use of face coverings (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) including washing instructions.
3. Limit the use of filtering facepiece respirators, unless required PPE for work being performed, by following other COVID-19 exposure control strategies and use of other facial coverings.
4. Impact resistant face shield can be used instead of safety glasses when fogging of glasses occurs during face mask use, but it must be marked ANSI Z87 or Z87+.
5. Required PPE, along with training, is to be provided and paid for by the employer.

Additional protections and protocols for in-store shopping-customers

1. Control the flow of traffic into the establishment by ensuring that maximum capacity plans are adjusted and managed at the front door.
 - Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette](#) and good [hand hygiene](#) at entrances and throughout the workplace where they are likely to be seen:
 - Post signage in breakrooms and restrooms.

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- Use verbal announcements on the loudspeaker to remind patrons and workers to maintain six-foot distance.
- 2. Institute one-way movement through aisles using floor markers.
- 3. Provide special store hours for seniors and vulnerable guests.
- 4. Provide remote shopping alternatives for customers and set up designated pick-up area.
- 5. Discourage customers from congregating.
- 6. After check-out – customers will be directed to leave through a different door than they entered to lessen the potential of people passing closely to each other.

Additional protections and protocols for staffing

1. Implement cohorting where possible. Have the same 10 workers or less work in the same area on the same shifts.
2. Reduce store hours to allow for proper cleaning and stocking.
3. Schedule as much stocking and deep cleaning as possible during hours the business is not open for customers.
4. If a 24-hour store, stock during the slowest period of the night.
5. Have a designated employee at all times to continuously clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces on a significantly increased schedule.

Additional protections and protocols for workers and cashiers

1. Limit number of employees restocking on the floor during busy times
 - Stock off-peak or after hours.
2. Provide face coverings and gloves to workers.
3. Separate cashiers by not opening all registers.
 - Open every other register.
4. Install plexiglass guards or partitions at any customer worker interaction point including:
 - Checkout lanes
 - Customer service desks
 - Pharmacy
5. Move the electronic payment terminal or credit card reader away from the cashier to increase the distance between the customer and the cashier.
6. Mark six-foot distance from cashier so that customers do not crowd.

7. Use floor decals, colored tape markings, and signs to designate where customers should stand.
8. Institute no touch payment methods and practices (e.g. for credit cards, reward cards and mobile devices).
9. When cash is exchanged:
 - Have customers place cash on the counter rather than directly into your hand.
 - Place money directly on the counter when providing change back to customers.
 - Do not touch your face afterward after cash exchange.
 - Wash or sanitize hands after cash exchange.
 - Wipe counter between each customer at checkout.

Additional protections and protocols for cleaning and disinfection

1. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as displays, shelving and reach-in refrigerator units nightly when closed to the public.
2. Frequently clean workstations, cash registers, payment terminals, door handles, tables, carts, baskets and countertops.
3. Clean employee break rooms, rest rooms and other common areas.
4. Provide disposable disinfectant wipes, cleaner, or spray so employees can wipe down frequently touched surfaces such as workstations, cash registers, credit card touch pad, door handles, conveyer belts, tables, cart handles, and countertops.
5. For bodily fluid events (e.g. vomiting or diarrhea) isolate the area of potential contamination, provide appropriate personal protective equipment to workers for clean-up and sanitize the area.

Additional protections and protocols for customer experience

1. Reusable bags may be used if the customer packs their own bags and six-feet of separation can be maintained with the cashier.
 - Sanitize the area after a reusable bag has been used.
2. Self-service food and beverage areas are allowed as long as the COVID-19 plan addresses customer protections such as oversight of the self-service area to ensure social distancing is maintained, hands are being sanitized and customers are strongly encouraged to wear face masks in the self-service area. Best practice would be to prepackage food ahead of time as much as possible. Refer to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture guidance Customers Best Practices For Reusable Bags and Food Takeout Containers (www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/inline-files/COVID-19%20Reusable%20Bags-Takeout%20Containers%20BPs%20Mar%202020.pdf).

3. Food samples are allowed as long as the food is covered or shielded according to the Minnesota Food Code, samples are pre-portioned, the sample area is monitored by a worker to maintain social distancing and discourage congregating, the worker is protected by social distancing and/or the use of barriers and adequate trash receptacles are provided to dispose of waste.

Additional protections and protocols for perimeter departments (e.g. bakery counter, deli counter, meat counter, seafood department, or coffee bar)

1. Ensure workers regularly wash their hands. Ensure handwashing and/or hand-sanitizer facilities are readily available and appropriately stocked.
2. Provide protective equipment and supplies, such as source control face coverings, face-shields, gloves, hand-sanitizer, disinfectants and provide training when required and on proper use.
3. Require the use of source control face coverings (e.g. cloth face coverings).
4. Maintain utensils behind the counter (e.g. napkins, straws, forks), and provide according to order.
5. Provide for individually wrapped products (e.g. condiments).
6. Ensure self-service beverage machines and counters are sanitized frequently.
7. Continue to follow safety guidelines as provided by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.
8. For instore consumption refer to Minnesota’s “Industry Guidance for Safely Reopening: Restaurants & Bars” for additional guidance involving food-service. See staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/restaurants-bars.jsp.

Appendix A – Guidance for developing an Employer Preparedness Plan

General

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Coronavirus (COVID-19) – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV

Minnesota Department of Health (MDH): Coronavirus – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus

State of Minnesota: COVID-19 response – mn.gov/covid19

Businesses

CDC: Resources for businesses and employers – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

CDC: General business frequently asked questions – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html

CDC: Building/business ventilation – www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: [Businesses and employers: COVID-19 – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)

MDH: Health screening checklist – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: Materials for businesses and employers – www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED): COVID-19 information and resources – mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI): Updates related to COVID-19 – www.dli.mn.gov/updates

Federal OSHA – www.osha.gov

AIHA Back to Work Safely – www.backtoworksafely.org/

Handwashing

MDH: Handwashing video translated into multiple languages – www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdQuPGVcceg

Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html

Social distancing

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html

Housekeeping

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Workers exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

State of Minnesota – mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/get-tested/index.jsp

Training

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html

Federal OSHA: www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf

MDH: www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf

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