



Guidance for Grocery Stores

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and people are increasingly concerned about personal protection, it is essential for retail food and grocery stores to ensure safe and reliable access to food, supplies and other provisions – and to take measures aimed at preventing further transmission of the virus. This guidance document outlines key steps for the sector to implement during the pandemic.

While food retailers are considered essential and allowed to remain open under the Public Health Order, precautions should be taken by stores to protect worker and public health. The guidance listed below is targeted at food retailers. For general information to help workplaces implement COVID-19 response requirements, please refer to the [saskatchewan.ca/COVID19, Public Health Measures, Workplaces](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19,PublicHealthMeasures,Workplaces) page.

Recommendation for Store Operations

- Enhance the store's sanitation plan and schedule. Check that the disinfectant used in the store is appropriate for elimination of viruses. Increase cleaning and disinfection of commonly contacted areas. Commonly contacted areas include doorknobs, cooler and freezer handles, till conveyances, keyboards, scales, bathroom surfaces, countertops, PIN pads, self-pay stations, hand baskets and light switches. Keep in mind that common touch areas include those in both customer and employee accessed areas.
- Ensure staff are practicing proper hygiene proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette including:
 - Washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Use hand sanitizer when hands are not visibly dirty and handwashing isn't available.
 - Only use hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number).
 - Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue, then immediately dispose of the tissue and wash hands. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.

- Ensure employee and public washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and that warm running water is available. Garbage bins should be emptied frequently. Antibacterial soap is not recommended and has no additional benefit in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Provide clean carry-out bags for purchased food and grocery products. Customers should be encouraged not to use their own containers, reusable bags or boxes.
- Post signs indicating that no customer packaging is to be used or placed on checkout counters.
- Do not sell bulk items, except via gravity feed bins, or where staff dispense the bulk items. If used, gravity feed bins should be supervised and wiped down between use.
- Place hand sanitizer with a minimum of 70% ethyl alcohol in dispensers near doors, pay stations and other high-touch locations for customers and staff use. Make wipes and trash bins available for wiping down shopping carts and disposing of the wipes. Hand sanitizers should be approved by Health Canada and have a DIN or NPN.
- Promote physical distancing of customers:
 - Use physical queue line controls, such as crowd control cordons at entrances and checkout lines. Place markers (e.g. tape or cones) every two metres as visible cues to support physical distancing.
 - Make announcements at regular intervals over store speaker reminding customers to stay two meters away from each other.
 - Have clear signs in multiple locations that indicate the maximum number of customers and staff a store can accommodate at any one time.
 - Consider monitoring the number of customers and staff entering and leaving the store. Once the maximum number of persons for a store is reached, allow one person in for every person who leaves.
- Offer online or telephone orders with delivery or pick-up services as alternatives to in-person shopping.
- Limit the handling of credit cards, debit cards and loyalty cards wherever possible, by allowing customers to scan. There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 can be passed on to others by touching or handling cash.
- Employees who handle cash or credit cards should practice proper hand hygiene. When hands are not visibly soiled and between customer interactions, hand sanitizer can be used. Employees should wash their hands with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled, before and after any breaks, at the beginning and end of their shift, and before preparing food.

- Glove use is not required. If staff are using gloves, they should be changed after every interaction and when changing tasks. Hand hygiene must be performed between every glove change (hand sanitizer or hand washing with soap and water).
- Ask customers who arrive with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough or breathing issues) to return home and use a delivery service instead.
- All workers, especially those in constant contact with the public, should self-monitor for symptoms and use the self-assessment tool available on the Government of Saskatchewan's website.
- Workplaces are encouraged to have plans in place for increased worker absences due to illness or isolation. Workplaces should have a workplace illness policy. If policies do not exist or are not in line with COVID-19 recommendations, workplaces should ensure the following:
 - Sick employees should stay home or be sent home from work.
 - For employees housed in workplace accommodations (i.e. work camps), ill employees should be confined to their room while ill until cleared for re-entry into the workforce.
 - The Government of Saskatchewan provides an online COVID19 self-assessment screening tool to help determine if illness may be COVID-19. The tool provides ill workers with next steps depending on responses.
 - If an employee has gone home sick from the workplace, their work areas should be cleaned and disinfected.

Calculating the Maximum Number of People in a Store

A good rule for calculating the maximum number of people in a store at any one time (customers and staff) is four square metres of retail floor space per person.

Information for Staff, Customers and Business Owners About COVID-19

- **Personal Health** – If you or someone you know is experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough or breathing issues), use the online self-assessment tool at www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19 to determine if you should contact HealthLine 811 or your family physician. If you meet the criteria, you will be referred to one of Saskatchewan's many community testing sites.

- **Online Updates** – Due to the evolving nature of COVID-19, visit www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19 for up-to-date content on a variety of subjects, including public health orders, testing information and self-isolation.
- **Mental Health Supports** – HealthLine's registered psychiatric nurses and registered social workers offer crisis support advice and connections to resources in the community. Free counselling services are available in 23 communities for anyone experiencing a mental health challenge.
- **Business Supports** – The Government of Saskatchewan's Businesses Response Team (BRT) helps support businesses and workers dealing with economic challenges stemming from COVID-19. The BRT answers questions, and helps identify potential provincial and federal program supports. To seek further information, call 1-844-800-8688 or email supportforbusiness@gov.sk.ca.
- **Inquiry Lines** – Health-related inquiries should be directed to HealthLine 811. Non-health-related questions can go to the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency at 1-855-559-5502 (306-787-5539 for Regina residents). The service is available 16 hours a day, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Public inquiries can also be directed to COVID19@health.gov.sk.ca.

Employers should reassess their work environment every day and keep updated with the information posted on saskatchewan.ca.