



RETAIL BUSINESS OVERVIEW

The framework below represents the City of Boston’s operational recommendations for **Retail Businesses**. These operational recommendations incorporate the [Commonwealth’s Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Operators of Retail Facilities](#) and supplement them with recommendations based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and industry associations to offer best practices for ensuring social distancing and reducing risk at events as well as preparing and returning to the physical workplace, preparing the workforce, and ensuring continuity of operations.

These operational recommendations apply to operations permitted during Phase 2 and Phase 3, Step 1 of the Commonwealth’s phased reopening plan and are subject to change by the City of Boston at any time based upon changes to the Commonwealth’s Workplace Safety Standards, CDC guidance, or other public health information or analysis. Additionally, as part of Phase 3 Step 1, retail operators are permitted to open fitting rooms for businesses for which their operation is necessary.

These operational recommendations provide City of Boston businesses with clarity about how to operate in Boston given its unique diversity, density, population, and built environment. Businesses, however, must comply with all current state standards at all times.

All actions undertaken to comply with Commonwealth standards and City of Boston recommendations must also comply with regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. In addition to these standards, event organizers should continue to abide by any and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, policies, certifications, and licensure requirements for their facility.

Following these recommendations will ensure greater public health and safety. The City of Boston strongly encourages people in vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, to continue to avoid unnecessary public outings and inessential services. Staff health is also a critical factor in whether retail can safely open and serve customers.

Key Considerations

- Reopening services will increase the risk of COVID-19 spread; thus, the goal is to know, communicate, and manage transmission risk.
- Programs, services, and industries must be altered—some significantly—for several months or longer until a vaccine or effective treatment is developed.



- All plans must include mechanisms for how programs and services can be quickly scaled back if COVID-19 cases and deaths begin to spike
- Linguistically and culturally appropriate public messaging and communications are critical.
- The experiences and needs of those disproportionately affected will be overlooked if not explicitly considered in all plans.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MANDATORY STANDARDS

No activity in Retail Businesses can occur without meeting these sector specific COVID-19 workplace safety standards for Retail Businesses. These standards apply, until rescinded or amended by the State, to all Retail Businesses These standards supersede and replace existing Department of Public Health guidance governing grocery stores and pharmacies. These standards apply to all enterprises permitted to operate until rescinded or amended by the state, except for Farmers' Markets, which shall continue to be governed by Department of Public Health Guidance and where sector-specific standards are applicable to part or all of the enterprise's activities, in which case enterprises must follow those sector-specific standards. The owner of the enterprise shall be responsible for meeting these standards:

- [Massachusetts Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Retail Businesses](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These additional safety guidelines and resources are available to support Retail Businesses.

U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

- [OSHA – COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [OSHA – Enforcement Guidelines Webpage](#)
- [OSHA Fact Sheet](#) – Protecting Workers During a Pandemic

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [CDC – Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [CDC – Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease](#) (Updated 3/21/20)



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

List of EPA-approved disinfectants:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

U.S. Department of Labor

Information on employee leave rights:

- [Department of Labor Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)



RETAIL OPERATIONAL CHECKLISTS

The following workplace safety standards are organized around four distinct categories covering Physical Space and Social Distancing; Management and Employee; Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hygiene Protocols; and Confirmed Cases. This Operational Guidance is based on the [Commonwealth of Massachusetts Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Retail](#), updated as of July 10, 2020. *Please note: For all the following checklists, items listed in bold are standards that have been issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Items not listed in bold are additional standards required or recommended by the City of Boston.*

PHYSICAL SPACE AND SOCIAL DISTANCING CHECKLIST

Retail management and employee personnel must implement physical amendments and procedures to ensure social distancing is available and followed for all workers and customers. Retail operators should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>Each business must monitor customer entries and exits and limit occupancy at all times to the greater of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 50% of the building’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder. ● Buildings for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow 10 persons (including staff) per 1,000 square feet of accessible space. ● In any case, no enclosed space within the building may exceed occupancy of 10 persons per 1,000 square feet. ● All occupancy counts and calculations shall include customers, staff, and other workers. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Operators of enclosed shopping malls and other indoor, multi-tenant retail spaces must monitor customer and worker entries and exits to common areas and limit occupancy of common areas at all times to 50% of the maximum permitted occupancy levels.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Within enclosed shopping malls and other indoor multi-tenant retail spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Retailers or restaurants (not including stand-alone restaurants) serving food and beverage may only provide take-out or delivery service. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any seating areas, including food courts, must be closed.• Any children’s play areas must be closed.• All arcades must follow the Arcades and Other Indoor and Outdoor Game and Recreation Businesses	
Grocery stores and retail stores with a pharmacy department must provide dedicated hours at least 1 hour each day of operation, in the early morning, for adults 60 years of age and older. These hours must be conspicuously posted	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals where possible: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Close or reconfigure worker common spaces and high-density areas where workers are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms, eating areas) to allow social distancing.• Physical partitions must separate workstations that cannot be spaced out (partitions must be at least 6 feet in height).• Install physical barriers for checkout stations where possible, otherwise maintain 6 feet distance where not possible.• Install visual social distancing markers to encourage customers to remain 6 feet apart (e.g., lines outside of the stores if applicable, lines to make payments, lines to use the restroom).• Mark rooms and hallways to indicate 6 feet of separation	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Establish directional aisles to manage customer flow for foot traffic, if possible, to minimize contact (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to the store, one-way aisles). Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Stagger lunch and break times, regulating max number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Self-serve, unattended buffets, topping bars, and other communal serving areas (such as salad bars) must remain closed. Retailers must eliminate any open free samples or tastings. Self-serve beverage stations must comply with the following guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand sanitizer must be made available next to beverage stations and operators must instruct customers to use before pouring beverages• Only straws and stirrers individually wrapped in cellophane or paper are allowed• Cups and lids must be from single pull dispenser or other method to minimize contact• Sweeteners, sugars and creamers must be individual packets• Floor markers must be installed to achieve social distancing	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of personal mugs and cups are not allowed • Frequent disinfecting of the beverage station must take place, even during busy times 	
Retailers may not permit sampling or application of personal goods (i.e., makeup, perfume, lotion).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Allow fitting rooms for businesses for which their operation is necessary. Any clothing tried on by a customer must either be quarantined for 24 hours or thoroughly steam cleaned prior to returning to the floor	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
If the store offers delivery, curbside pickup capabilities, or limited “appointment only shopping,” customers should be encouraged to use those methods before coming into the store.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Other retail stores are encouraged to offer exclusive hours or other accommodations for those in high-risk populations as defined by the CDC.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage contactless payment methods.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Other retail stores are encouraged to offer exclusive hours or other accommodations for those in high-risk populations as defined by the CDC	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Avoid direct hand-off of items as much as possible (e.g., purchases, bags, receipts, payments).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Display a door or sidewalk sign with the services available that encourage social distancing (e.g., curbside), instructions for ordering, pickup, and hours of operation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

RETAIL MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

Retail management and employee personnel must ensure these mandated staffing and operations requirements are being implemented and followed at all times. Retail management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing, handwashing, and proper use of face coverings; 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

If you have any questions about the City of Boston’s operational recommendations for businesses, employers, and commercial landlords for return-to-work strategies for office workplaces, please email reopening@boston.gov.



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-screening at home, including temperature or symptom checks;• Importance of not coming to work if ill;• When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe; and,• Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus.	
<p>Facilities must screen workers at each shift by ensuring the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.• Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic.• Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official.• Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace employer for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Adjust workplace hours and shifts (leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival/departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry points.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Businesses should reduce operating hours to allow for ongoing off-hour sanitation and cleaning.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Limit visitors and service providers on-site, and complete shipping and deliveries in designated areas.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Workers should stay home if they are feeling ill.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<p>Post notice to workers and customers of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>For in-home delivery of products, such as furniture and appliances, screen customers for symptoms prior to workers entering the house. Delay delivery if the customer indicates a potential COVID-19–positive person in the household.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Additional City of Boston recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate workplace policies clearly, frequently, and through various channels. ● Consider daily team all-staff conference calls or virtual check-ins to disseminate information and policy changes. ● Prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace by keeping health information private in compliance with state and federal laws. ● Uphold stringent anti-discrimination policies, with a zero-tolerance policy for any assumption of COVID-19 risk or infection status based on race or country of origin and offer a safe way for workers to report an instance of discrimination. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Best Practices/Recommendations</p>	<p>Status</p>
<p>Workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the Centers for Disease Control (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the employer of the office for purposes of cleaning and/or disinfecting and contact tracing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Limit employee movement to discrete work zones to minimize overlap where possible</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>For merchandise deliveries, implement a touchless delivery system, where practicable.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>For in-home delivery of merchandise such as furniture and appliances, Retail operators should perform symptom-screening checks as before delivery occurs. Delivery will be rescheduled if there are potential COVID-19 symptoms indicated by the customer or possibly by someone in the household. Draft: “In the last 2–14 days, have you or a person in your household been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and/or are experiencing the following COVID-19 symptoms?”</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fever or chills ● Cough ● Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing ● Fatigue ● Muscle or body aches ● Headache ● New loss of taste or smell ● Sore throat ● Congestion or runny nose ● Nausea or vomiting ● Diarrhea” 	
Use an Emergency Notification System and maintain updated contact information for employees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Provide employees with personal protective equipment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Provide temperature and/or symptom screenings for all workers at the beginning of their shift and for any vendors or contractors entering the facility. Make sure the temperature and/or symptom screener avoids close contact with workers to the extent possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
If providing temperature screenings on-site is not feasible, self-screening at home may be implemented. Ensure that screening is performed prior to the worker leaving the home for his or her shift and follows CDC guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
When possible, allow for flexibility in working hours so employees can commute during non-peak times.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage employees to wash their hands as quickly as possible upon entering the workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND HYGIENE CHECKLIST

Retail management and employees must ensure these mandated cleaning and hygiene requirements are implemented and being followed at all times. Management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
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Disinfect shared equipment, such as cash registers, intercoms, and tagging machines, before use by another employee.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Ensure access to handwashing facilities on-site, including soap and running water, wherever possible and encourage frequent handwashing; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Supply workers at workplace location with adequate cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol should be made available at entrances and throughout floor areas for both workers and customers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Avoid sharing equipment and supplies between workers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Post visible signage throughout the site to remind workers of hygiene and safety protocols.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Clean commonly touched surfaces in restrooms (e.g., toilet seats, doorknobs, stall handles, sinks, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers) frequently and in accordance with CDC guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of site (at least daily and more frequently if feasible)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, baskets, carts, staff break rooms)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
In event of a positive case, shut down site for a deep cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Once returned or tried on by customers, remove clothing from service for 24 hours (before it can be returned by staff and handled by another customer)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
Open windows and doors to increase airflow where possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Establish a Response Action protocol to clean spaces where there were confirmed cases of infection and/or exposure and notification to the workplace coordinator. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If management is notified of a positive case in a building, close the section of the building to which that person had access for deep cleaning. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Prohibit any mutual touching of equipment or supplies between customers or workers without sanitation between uses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



Deploy sanitizing stations at high-traffic areas.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Where possible, establish standalone single-use sanitizing wipe dispensers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage use of door-stoppers wherever possible to minimize contact with or individual use of doorknobs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

CONFIRMED CASES CHECKLIST

Confirmed COVID cases for retail employees or previous customers will require review and adherence to this checklist.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace (including from other employees, customers, vendors, delivery personnel, or anyone accessing the facility), the employer should notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) where the workplace is located and work with them to trace likely contacts in the workplace and advise workers and others who may have accessed the space to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of others who accessed the same space may be recommended consistent with guidance and/or at the request of the LBOH.</p> <p>In the event of an employee notifying an employer of a positive COVID case, the employer should obtain consent from the employee to share his or her personal information with the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC). If the employer does not have consent to share the employee’s information, the employer can still call BPHC for general guidance on closures and identifying close contacts. The employer cannot reveal information about the confirmed case to close contacts due to privacy concerns. This function may be supported by public health agencies other than BPHC depending on the location of the confirmed case.</p> <p>When calling BPHC, employers should be able to identify whether the employee worked 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or was asymptomatic 48 hours prior to the test. The employer should also be able to identify if the employee was wearing a face covering at work, details of work conditions, locations of work (i.e., inside, outside), proximity to other employees or customers, level of interaction with the public, and barriers or face coverings that were in place.</p> <p>The employer will help the LBOH to identify employee(s) who may have had contact with the confirmed case. The employer will notify these employees of the need to quarantine. The employer and LBOH will reach out to affected healthcare providers. Contacts to a confirmed case should be encouraged to have a COVID-19 test. Any employee who is identified as a close contact should not return to work for at least for 14 days.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing</p>



In the event of a presumptive or actual positive COVID-19 case of a worker, customer, or vendor, the retail facility must be immediately shut down for 24 hours and then must be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with current CDC guidance before re-opening.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
Workers who test positive for COVID-19 should not be allowed to return to work until cleared by a medical professional as being symptom-free for at least 3 days and having been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Any previous customer who has notified the retail operator of a positive case should be encouraged to contact LBOH. The retail operator should also contact any employee and known customer(s) who may have come into contact with that customer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Maintain and review customer and employee records as necessary for information to support contact-tracing efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing