



COVID-19 REOPENING GUIDANCE FOR RETAIL AND SHOPPING CENTER OPERATIONS

UPDATED ON OCTOBER 22, 2020
Latest revisions are in red text.

Note: On Friday, August 28, 2020, the State announced a shift from its Monitoring List to a color-coded four-tier Blueprint for a Safer Economy. In doing so, the State altered the reopening plans for some businesses and activities, opening some that had been prohibited and imposing new standards on others. The State also reiterated that local Health Officers have the power to impose greater restrictions than the State.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

To provide general guidance and best practices for safe reopening. Contact COVIDRecovery@acgov.org if you have questions or require technical assistance. For business resources, visit <https://covid-19.acgov.org/index.page>.

NOTE: The [Alameda County Reopening Plan](#) is in alignment with the State's [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#), but there will be areas where Alameda County is more restrictive than the State. The more restrictive guidance prevails.

BUSINESS REQUIREMENTS

1. Prepare and implement a [COVID-19 Site Specific Protection Plan](#) based on local and [State industry specific guidance](#)
2. Train employees on COVID-19 prevention, symptom screening, face coverings, and importance of physical distancing and frequent handwashing
3. Implement [symptom screening](#) for all employees and do not allow employees who exhibit symptoms to come to work
4. Develop cleaning and disinfecting protocols
5. Establish physical distancing guidelines
6. Ensure compliance with the [Alameda County Face Covering Order](#) by all persons in your place of business (patrons, employees, suppliers, etc.). Both personnel and patrons will be required to wear a face covering—including during the exercise—unless they are specifically exempted from the face covering requirements in Health Officer Order No. 20-13, updated on June 5, 2020 or comply with specific requirements set forth below.

7. Comply with guidance issued by the [California Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#), all [Local Health Officer Orders](#), and applicable federal, California, and local provisions for paid sick leave for individuals who cannot safely work for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RETAIL GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

- Any retail store that provides indoor shopping for customers under these guidelines are strongly encouraged to continue to provide curbside/storefront pick up and/or delivery, if feasible, to allow customers options to shop that does not require customers to go indoors.
- Indoor shopping may occur by appointment and/or on a first come first served basis. The store must limit its indoor occupancy to **50%** of the store's normal maximum occupancy.
- For grocery stores only, occupancy must be capped at 50% of the store's normal maximum.
- Individual businesses may establish lower occupancy limits if desired.
- Businesses may establish customer time limits for occupying the store to ensure traffic flow.
- Ensure customers remain a minimum of six feet from employees during the checkout process by installing partitions, barriers or by other means; or install protective plexiglass screens if keeping a six-foot distance is not possible, except as necessary to accept payment.
- Consider providing dedicated in-store visit hours for people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- Assign personnel that is always on-site to monitor store capacity. The person assigned must ask customers to queue at six-foot distances at the door if the capacity of the store is reached.
- Customers and employees must sanitize or glove hands before handling any merchandise. Store owners should provide hand sanitizer whenever possible.
- Cashless and touchless transactions systems are preferred wherever possible.
- If available, orders, reservations, and payments for the drive-in business should be made in advance online or over the phone.
- Disallow sampling and customer access to bulk-bin options.
- **Stores may open fitting rooms if they require all patrons to wear face coverings while in those rooms. Fitting rooms should be sanitized frequently.**
- Apply floor decals in cashier and queuing areas to establish safe waiting distance.
- Establish one-way traffic flow through aisles in cases where customers cannot maintain six feet of distance while passing.
- Create a single entrance and single exit where possible.
- Handle returns based on the latest industry guidance available. Retailers should hold onto returned items for 24 hours before placing them back into circulation for sale. Consider extending the deadline for returns or exchanges of items to help customers postpone repeat trips to the business until a safer time or encourage customers to send returns or exchanges by a delivery service in order to reduce unnecessary contact.
- Prohibit personnel from using handshakes and similar greetings that violate physical distancing protocols.
- Retail businesses that sell new or used cars at the retail level must follow the above retail guidelines and [State guidance for auto dealerships](#), as well as the following:

- Increase distances between tables/chairs in showrooms and waiting areas to ensure physical distancing in-person meetings, if they are necessary, to ensure physical distancing.
- For personnel management, auto dealerships will follow the [State's office workspace guidance](#) for office space management.
- Allow only one customer in vehicles during test drives with the employee sitting in opposite back seat. Both customer and employee must wear face coverings as required by the Health Officer Order for Face Coverings at all times, including during a test drive.

SHOPPING CENTERS (SHOPPING MALLS, DESTINATION SHOPPING CENTERS, STRIP & OUTLET MALLS, AND SWAP MEETS) GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICES

- Indoor capacity must be limited to **50%** for shopping malls, destination shopping centers, and swap meets.
- Limit parking availability, where feasible, to further enforce the revised maximum occupancy limits.
- **Food courts must comply with the [Alameda County Restaurant Operating Procedures](#).**
- Common areas must close.
- All public events or concentrated gatherings, including musical or other performances at shopping centers must be cancelled or postponed.
- Children's play areas and other amenities like carousels, rides, or arcades must be closed.
- Shopping centers must take reasonable measures, including posting signage in strategic and highly-visible locations, to remind workers, retail tenants, vendors, and the public that they must use face coverings and maintain physical distancing.
- Apply floor decals in queuing areas to establish safe waiting distance.
- Shopping centers should provide their COVID-19 Site Specific Protection Plan to all retail tenants and vendors.
- We further recommend that shopping center operators, retail tenants, and vendors collaborate to:
 - Share information, training, and resources;
 - Create common plans for store entry queuing systems that do not disrupt foot traffic or violate physical distancing requirements;
 - Consider alternate entry to retail tenant facilities;
 - Devise strategies for pickup and delivery service options; and
 - Consider dedicated shopping hours for hours for vulnerable populations, including seniors and those medically vulnerable, preferably at a time following a complete cleaning.
- Shopping centers should consider developing a quality assurance team to ensure retail tenants and other vendors are also abiding by the COVID-19 prevention plan, possibly in collaboration with retail tenants.
- Indoor malls and shopping centers should consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in indoor spaces.
- Outdoor vendor carts, kiosks and booths must be configured so as to not interfere with updated foot traffic measures or inhibit physical distancing requirements.
- Back office personnel who work in offices must comply with the [State's office workspace guidance](#).