



## Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



# **Grocery & Convenience Stores, Pharmacies and Gas Stations During COVID-19**

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that can cause respiratory illness. For updated information about COVID-19, go to [durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus](https://durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus)

To further reduce the risk of spreading the disease we are recommending these facilities follow the [Province's sector specific guidance documents](#) and implement the following recommendations below.

### **Physical (Social) Distancing Precautions:**

- Maintain a distance of 2 metres with other people. Limit the number of family members visiting these facilities (e.g. 1-2 people).
- Limit the number of people within the facility. Control how many patrons enter the facility at one time (monitoring entry/exit by designating/assigning crowd control staff for each shift).
- Continuously monitor and take steps to prevent crowding (e.g. line up at the cash by placing tape/markings on the floor 2 metres apart, barriers around the employee when restocking, one-way direction in the aisles, physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass dividers), etc).
- Pay extra attention to ensure crowding doesn't occur and physical distancing is being maintained.
- Place physical distancing signage around the facility, particularly in high traffic areas.
- Place physical distance reminders throughout the facility as to what 2 metres looks like e.g. tape, markers, pylons etc.

### **Facility Operations:**

- Post signs at all entrances directing those that are sick not to enter.
- Providing portable handwash station or hand sanitizer at the entrance and throughout the facility.
- Frequent reminders over the PA system to patrons and employees regarding physical distancing (2 metres apart) and any other key messaging (e.g. sanitizing hands at entrance, stay home if feeling ill, no gathering/crowding in one area, ensure 2 metres apart in line-ups, etc.).
- Designate the first hour of opening to vulnerable populations (e.g. Seniors).
- Returned items are recommended to be quarantined for 72 hours before returning items back on the shelves.
- Reusable shopping bags are permitted to be used. It is a best practice when using a reusable bag to have customers pack their own bags. If employees are packing reusable bags, ensure policies are in place to protect the worker (e.g. hand sanitizer after handling etc.).
- Remove self serve food items (e.g. pastries, buns, hot food items, condiments, drinks, etc.). These items can be prepackaged or may be served by a designated operator.
- For bulk food items (e.g. buns, pastries, spices, candies, nuts, etc.) where possible remove items or recommend pre-portioning for sale. If not possible, scoop/utensils used for foods must be replaced every 2 hours or as often as necessary to be cleaned and sanitized. Designate a staff



member to help with the patrons to scoop their items.

- Food samples are not to be provided to patrons.
- Have designated roles & responsibilities for employees. Avoid having multiple employees doing the same task within a space.
- Consider staggering shifts and break times and rotating work activities/tasks.
- Ensure facility measures are communicated to employees and enforced.
- Screen employees regularly. If anyone develops respiratory symptoms, implement procedures for reporting the illness and keeping the employee away from others.
- Ill staff must stay away from work. Plan for staff absences.
- For questions on home isolation or COVID-19, please visit [durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus](https://durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus)

### **Cleaning & Disinfection:**

- Clean and disinfect the debit machines after each customer.
- Clean and disinfect self-serve checkout (e.g. touch screen, debit machines etc.) after every customer OR provide disinfectant wipes at each station for patron use OR provide hand sanitizer at each station. If providing hand sanitizer or disinfecting wipes at each station, the self-serve checkout must still be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces and equipment (e.g. handles on freezer/cooler doors, produce carts, conveyor belts at cash, washrooms, counters, etc.) frequently.
- Clean and disinfect any installed impermeable barriers (e.g. plexiglass, etc.) frequently.
- Customer dividers at cash to be cleaned and disinfected after each use or use single use disposable dividers or direct patrons to leave a space between purchases.
- Limiting hours to properly clean and disinfect all areas of the facility.
- Commonly used [disinfectants](#) are effective against COVID-19. If an area is heavily soiled, it should be cleaned with soap and water before a disinfectant is used.
- Wipe down the carts/baskets with a disinfectant wipe between patrons or provide disinfectant wipes for the patrons to wipe the cart.

### **Handwashing & Glove Use:**

- Proper handwashing is the best method to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Handwashing facilities/stations and/or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer must be provided for employees to use during their shift. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer must not be used when hands are visibly soiled. Post handwashing poster at the station(s).
- Ensure to check the water, liquid soap and paper towel supplies at the handwashing station(s) to ensure there is an adequate amount (where applicable).
- Increased handwashing by employees: wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Single-use glove use is not recommended. If glove use is chosen it is important to change them every hour or more often as necessary and hands are to be washed and/or sanitized between changes. Remember to remove gloves when leaving the cash or changing tasks. When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time. A box of disposable single-use gloves must be supplied at each cash.

### **Personal Protection Measures:**

- A policy must be in place to prohibit persons from entering the premises if not wearing a non-medical mask/face covering. Consideration must be taken for persons with exemptions and best efforts shall be made to only allow entry to persons wearing a non-medical mask or face covering.
- A non-medical face mask or face covering must be worn by all persons (including the public and employees) when indoors, with limited exceptions.



- Ensure employees wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when required (e.g. medical masks, eye protection).
- Staff who are exempt from wearing a mask/face covering should be given a task with no interaction with the patrons and be able to maintain 2 metres away from other staff.
- A face shield is not a mask. If a patron/staff member chooses to wear a face shield, they must also wear a mask/face covering.
- Establishments are not required to provide non-medical masks/face coverings to patrons but can provide them if they wish.
- If there is a physical barrier installed/in-place between the staff and patrons (e.g. plexiglass, etc.) masks/face coverings are still required for staff and patrons while indoors.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people: keep a distance of 2 metres between people.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm.
- Stay home when you are ill.
- Prominently post "[Stop the Spread of Germs](#)" posters.
- Be aware of the most current, credible, public health information/recommendations and communicate these to your staff and customers.
- For questions on what to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have traveled, please visit [durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus](https://durham.ca/NovelCoronavirus)

**If you are not able to follow the recommendations listed above, contact your Public Health Inspector to discuss alternate options to reduce the potential risks to your staff and patrons.**

#### **References:**

Regional Municipality of Durham, [Community Re-opening Toolkit, May 2020](#)

Regional Municipality of Durham, [Instructions to ensure the mandatory use of non-medical masks and face coverings within Enclosed Public Spaces, December 2020](#)

Regional Municipality of Durham, [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services, [Guidance on Health and Safety for Retail General Labour Employees during COVID-19](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services, [Guidance on Health and Safety for Food Retail Sector during COVID-19](#)

Ministry of Health, [Face Coverings and face masks, May 2020](#)

Public Health Ontario, [Mask Use for Non-Healthcare Workers, May 2020](#)

Public Health Ontario, [Corona Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada, [Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) in Canada](#)

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