

BRIEFING
PAPER



Shropshire
Chamber of
Commerce

WORKPLACE GUIDANCE
FOR THE RETAIL SECTOR



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Government Workplace Guidance Summary for the Retail Sector

On the 25 May The Prime Minister announced that the Government had given the go ahead for non-essential shops to reopen from 15 June provided they follow COVID-Secure guidelines.

You can access the guidance in full [here](#)

All information is accurate and the guidance correct as of 28 May 2020.

A comprehensive list of the governments classification of shops and branches can be found below:

- Food retailers
- Chemists
- Hardware/home stores
- Fashion shops
- Charity shops
- Betting shops and arcades
- Tailors, dress fitters and fashion designers
- Car dealerships
- Auction houses
- Antique stores
- Retail art galleries
- Photography studios
- Gift shops and retail spaces in theatres, museums, libraries, heritage sites and tourism sites
- Mobile phone stores
- Indoor and outdoor markets
- Craft fairs
- Similar types of retail
- Bank branches
- Post offices
- Open money businesses

COVID-19 Risk assessments

Government guidance states that each individual business must conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment. This assessment has to be done in consultation with employees or an employee representative.

Retailers that employ five or more employees are required to document this assessment. The guidance also states that local authorities and The Health and Safety Executive are able to act if a company fails to comply with the relevant public health legislation and guidance, including the use of enforcement notices.

Following the completion of the employer's risk assessment, they should share the results with their employees and consider publishing it on their website. All firms with over 50 employees should publish their assessment online.

Employees Safety in Shop environments

The Government document addresses the steps in which employers should address employee's safety, including steps to protect them:

- Determine who is essential to be on the premises and who, such as back of house workers, can work from home
- Plan for the minimum number of staff to operate safely and effectively
- Monitor the wellbeing of those working from home and help ensure they remain connected to the rest of the workforce to avoid feelings of loneliness and exclusion
- Keep in touch regularly with off site employees on their working arrangements including welfare, mental and physical health, and personal security
- Provide the equipment necessary for people to work safely and effectively from home, such as remote access to work systems

Employees that have specific underlying health conditions that make them 'extremely vulnerable' to severe illness if they contract COVID-19 are strongly advised not to work outside the home by the government.

The Government advises that those who are deemed as 'clinically vulnerable' but not 'extremely vulnerable' should take extra care in observing social distancing and be helped to work from home or offered the option to take the safest roles on site.

Minimising Risk in your premises

In order to minimise the risk of COVID-19, the government has set out a number of steps that businesses can address in their risk assessment:

- Increase handwashing frequency and surface cleaning
- Encourage staff that can work from home to do so or, where this is not possible, to maintain two metre social distance guidelines at all times in the premises.
- Assess and consider which activities cannot be carried out from home or within social distancing guidelines which are needed for the company to operate and, if so, take all actions to reduce the risk including limiting the time of activity to be as short as possible, using protective screens or barriers and staffing solutions such as 'fixed teams' to prevent staff mixing
- Determine if activities that require people to work face-to face for a sustained period with more than a small group of fixed colleagues can take place safely

Retailers can download and print [this notice](#) to show they've followed the COVID-19 safety guidance.

Social distancing measures in shop environments

The Governments guidance reinforces the importance of maintaining social distancing at work in all areas of the business, including entrances and exits, break rooms, canteens, and similar settings where it is often the most challenging areas to maintain social distancing. The document the

published includes measures that retailers can introduce to ensure that staff are able to adapt to social distancing in shops by doing the following:

- Staggering employee arrival and departure times to limit contact and crowding
- Providing additional parking or facilities to help individuals run, walk or cycle to work
- Reducing congestion by making more entry points available into and out of stores
- Using a one-way system with floor marking for entrance and exit points, as well as throughout the building
- Provide hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer at entrance and exit points
- Limit access to certain areas to reduce movement
- Limit lift occupancy but ensure it is available when needed for those with disabilities, as well as providing hand sanitiser for lift operation
- Regulating use of high traffic areas in a building to allow for social distancing to take place
- Review layouts to allow workers to work further apart
- Use floor tapes and mark areas to help people keep to a two-metre distancing to take place
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- Use floor tapes and mark areas to help people keep to a two-metre distance
- Avoid face-to-face scenarios, including reviewing payments in stores and potentially look at screens to create physical barriers
- Use a consistent pairing system if people do have work together in proximity
- Minimise contacts around transactions and encourage contactless payments
- Rethink demonstrations and assessments of products to minimise direct contact
- Encourage staff to stagger their breaks and potentially take breaks outside but on-site where they will limit exposure to others
- Utilise screens to protect staff in reception areas and introducing controls in areas such as staff rooms, toilets, and employee lockers to avoid queues
- Where possible workstations should be assigned to a single individual and if they are shared by the small possible number of people
- Where it is not possible to keep workstations two metres apart, the business should consider how this can be mitigated, such as closing one till and operating at reduced capacity

Managing your customers

The Governments guidance states that the contact between customers and staff must be limited wherever possible. The following steps should be taken to manage contact with customers:

- Define and limit the number of customers that can reasonably follow social distancing in store, considering floor space, 'pinch points' and busy areas
- Encourage customers to shop alone where possible unless they need specific assistance
- Look at how people walk through the shop and how this can be adjusted to

reduce congestion and contact between customers, for example, que management or one-way flow

- Ensure any changes to entries, exits and queue management have reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of customers, including disabled shoppers
- Use outside premises for queuing where available and safe, for example some car parks
- Suspend or reduce customer services that cannot be undertaken without contravening social distancing
- Work with a local authority or landlord to consider the impact of

your processes on public spaces such as high streets and public car parks

- Have clearly designated positions from which colleagues can provide advice or assistance to customers whilst maintaining social distance
- Use signage and visual aids to communicate the new social distancing measures to customers and employees prior to entering and during their shopping visit
- Appoint a 'social distancing champion' to explain and demonstrate social distancing guidelines to customers

Handling products and payments

To help prevent the chance of COVID-19 transmission, the Government's guidance outlines a focus on reducing the handling of merchandise by customers and cash.

Alongside the emphasis to increase handwashing and hand sanitation, as well as introducing contactless payments and refunds, the governments guidance also outlines additional step retailers can consider implementing including:

- Limiting customer handling of merchandise through different display methods, new signage, or rotation of high-touch stock
- Put in place picking-up and dropping-off collection points where possible, rather than passing goods hand-to hand
- Enforce staggered collection times for customers collecting items, with a queuing system in place to ensure a safe distance of two metres
- Set up a 'no contact' return procedures where customers take returns goods to a designated area and encourage contactless refunds
- Provide guidance to how workers can safely assist customers with handling large-item purchases
- Store items that have been returned, donated brought in for repair or extensively handle, in a container or separate room for 72 hours, or cleaning products, before displaying them on the shop floor. Materials used for cleaning can be disposed of normally
- Consider placing protective coverings on large items that may require customer testing or use, for example, furniture, beds or seats. Ensure frequent cleaning of these coverings between uses, using usual cleaning products
- Clean touchpoints after each customer use or handover, particularly in cases where equipment has been rented

Personal Protective Equipment and face coverings

Government guidance states that retailers already using Personal Protective Equipment in work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 risks should continue to do so.

The guidance goes on to say 'when managing the risk of COVID-19, additional PPE beyond what you usually wear is not beneficial. This is because COVID-19 is a different type of risk to the risks you normally face in a workplace, and needs to be managed through social distancing, hygiene and fixed teams or partnering, not through the use of PPE'.

Face coverings are not a legal requirement and, they are not a substitute for increasing hygiene levels and strict social distancing. Employers should support employees who would like to wear a face covering whilst informing them of the following advice:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for twenty seconds or use hand sanitizer
- Practice social distancing wherever possible
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching the face or face covering, as it could contaminate them with germs from the hands
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if the user has touched it
- Continue to wash hands regularly
- Change the face covering daily
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in the usual waste

For the complete government guidance press [here](#)

For more information please contact your local authority or HSE.

Details can be found below:

Shropshire Council Coronavirus Helpline- 0345 678 9028

Telford and Wrekin Council- 01952380000

Health and Safety Executive- 0300 003 1747