



CITY of NORTHAMPTON

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

Grocery/ Retail Store Recommendations

Dear Retail Store Owner's, Managers and Operators,

On March 11th COVID-19 (Coronavirus) was declared a global pandemic. In trying to minimize community transmission, the Northampton Health Department is making the following recommendations and are asking retail stores that are considered essential services to adopt them into your standards of practice immediately. Please note as the situation evolves, recommendations may change. Visit www.northamptonma.gov for updates or for business specific questions, please contact Health Inspector, Jasmine Ward at 413-587-1217 or jward@northamptonma.gov

1. Adopt policies to help maintain social distancing (6 feet) between customers/employees.
 - place tape at a 6 foot distance between customer and check out staff.
 - place tape every 6 feet between customers at the checkout line to help customers maintain social distancing.
2. Provide dedicated shopping times exclusively for highly vulnerable populations.
3. Use online ordering with outside pick-up or delivery options.
4. Post a sign at the front door asking customers to wash their hands or use sanitizer upon entry.
 - Provide sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and/or a temporary hand wash station at each entry point.
5. Arrange end caps of isles to have commonly purchased items to reduce the time spent by shoppers in the facility.
6. Each department manager shall be responsible for ensuring employees increase the amount of handwashing by 50% of what they normally do, including cashiers.
7. Provide gloves for cashiers.
8. Provide sanitizer at each self check out line.
9. Station employee at self checkout area to continually disinfect high touch areas.

10. Limit the number of customers allowed in at any given time as necessary to reduce crowding to meet social distancing guidance.
11. Monitor lines outside for those who are waiting to come in.
 - place tape at 6 foot marker between customers
12. Designate an employee to be responsible for wiping down all cart and basket handles with disinfectant after use.
13. Food facilities are required to use EPA-registered “sanitizer” products in their cleaning and sanitizing practice.
 - In addition, there is a list of EPA-registered “disinfectant” products for COVID-19 on the [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 list](#) that have qualified under EPA’s emerging viral pathogen program for use against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.
 - Check the product label guidelines for if and where these disinfectant products are safe and recommended for use in food manufacturing areas or food establishments. Below is a link to the list of products that have been tested which is not to be considered exhaustive:
<https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>
 - Sanitizer solutions/buckets should be tested when first mixed, and changed at least every four hours. Sanitizing clothes should be stored in the solution in between use. Consider keeping a log.
14. Remove all communal utensils, keep them behind the counter;
 - purchase pre-wrapped plastic utensils
 - provide upon request
15. Do not allow customers to use reusable containers.
16. Omit ALL self-service areas (i.e. salad-bars, coffee bars, hot bars).
17. Contact the health department if you are out of or running low on hand-sanitizing supplies for staff.
18. On-premises consumption of food and drink at bars and restaurants is prohibited until April 6th.
19. Ensure Dishwashers are operating at the correct temperature in order to clean and sanitize properly.
 - High Temperature Dishwashers should have a wash temp of 160 degrees F and a Rinse temp of 180 degrees F. Use your required internal max registering thermometer to ensure. Rinse water temperature shall achieve a surface temperature of 160°F or more.

- Low Temperature/Chemical Dishwashers dispense a sanitizing solution that must be checked using a test strip.

20. Environmental cleaning guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are followed (e.g., clean and disinfect high touch surfaces daily or more frequently).

- Suggestion: Ensure a clean and sanitary environment. Have employees disinfect frequently-touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails. [CDC](#) provides detailed environmental and disinfection recommendations.

21. Talk to staff about suggestions as to avoid touching eyes, mouth, and nose with unwashed hands. *Fun fact: The average person touches their face approximately 23 times per hour.*

22. Cover your coughs and sneezes in the crook of your elbow.

23. Screen employees for coronavirus symptoms upon arrival to work. Exclude if symptomatic.

- Suggestion: Have a plan to screen employees or volunteers every day. [CDC guidelines](#) identify the key symptoms to watch for as fever, cough and shortness of breath.
- Signage should discourage attendance for any person who has these systems.

24. Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

If an employee is positive for COVID-19, they are not allowed to return back to work until they have two negative tests or until fever is gone for three days and symptoms are gone.

If an employee has COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 100.4F or greater **and** a cough or respiratory symptoms) then the employee cannot return to work until they are completely symptom free.

If an employee has no COVID-19 symptoms and has been in direct contact with someone who has COVID-19 or has traveled to a listed travel advisory 3 country, then we encourage you to ask the employee not come to work for 14 days.

If an employee has been ill with COVID-19-like symptoms, establish a policy that they can not return to work for 72 hours after they are symptom free.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.htm>

The Health Department will be holding weekly teleconferences for COVID-19 Q&A, parsed out by its disciplinaries. Please visit the Northampton Health Department website for call-in information and how to submit questions.

<http://northamptonma.gov/2104/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

We appreciate your cooperation in this matter and value the partnership.

Thank you,

Merridith O'Leary

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Public Health Director*