



COVID-19: Mercantile reopening guidelines and best practices

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused retail operations to temporarily shut down, downsize or alter their way of doing business. Going forward, companies may have to restructure their point of service areas, and workforce, and implement new protocols to keep their employees and customers safe.

As state and local governments implement their return-to-work plans and companies resume operations, business owners will need to take into account the ever-changing orders, recommendations and guidance from their state and local authorities.

There is no single approach to returning to work. The following are some best practices that may help you reopen and/or continue towards normal operations, while protecting your employees, your customers and your business.

- Monitor local, state, and federal public health communications and ensure compliance with industry and location-specific requirements.
- Encourage employees to stay home if they are symptomatic or are sick. Refer to CDC guidance on symptoms at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Develop a screening process or health assessment for employees, when feasible (verbal screen, temperature readings, testing, personal protective equipment checks, etc.).
- Train employees on proper hand hygiene practices and ensure appropriate hand washing stations and sanitizers are available. For more guidance refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html>
- Train workers on social distancing practices, including recommended social distance guidelines from co-workers and customers.
- Redesign, realign, or reposition work and point of service areas to ensure social distancing. If not feasible, install Plexiglas shields, dividers, or similar physical barriers between work stations and points of service areas.
- Develop a written housekeeping and sanitation policy to ensure proper and thorough cleaning schedules are implemented. Clean and disinfect anything customers touch, i.e. door handles, shopping carts, restroom facilities, electronics (consider use of easily sanitized covers for electronics), equipment, machinery, etc. multiple times and at set times, each day. Be sure to use an EPA approved disinfectant approved for use against coronavirus, for more information refer to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Require employees that handle transactions with customers to wear protective gloves and to wash their hands at least hourly.

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- Encourage customers to social distance by monitoring entrances/exits, asking customers to maintain a CDC-recommended distance, placing markers on the floor at recommended distances for lines, checkouts, restrooms, etc. When possible, provide curbside service to limit direct exposure.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to your business and in other areas where they are likely to be seen. Provide hand sanitizers and no-touch disposal receptacles at entrances/exits, fuel pumps, shopping carts, etc.
- Provide hand washing areas with plentiful amounts of soap and water. If not feasible, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:
 - Increase ventilation rates.
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

OSHA COVID-19 Overview, news and updates, hazard recognition, standards, medical information, and control and prevention.

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

Regarding OSHA recordability questions, refer to <https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-04-10/enforcement-guidance-recording-cases-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for additional cleaning solutions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

CDC Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

EPA-approved products for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.

CDC hand hygiene guidelines

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>

CDC Help Stop the Spread

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>

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