

Reopening a retail business safely during COVID-19

Introduction

The UK Government has confirmed that non-essential retailers across England can reopen from 15 June as long as they are able to demonstrate that measures are in place to control coronavirus-related risks.

This factsheet outlines the steps retailers should take to reopen safely during the coronavirus outbreak.

Risk assessments

All retailers are required to complete a COVID-19 risk assessment before they can reopen on or after 15 June. The risk assessment should identify coronavirus-related risks and set out the measures that retailers will take to manage these risks and protect the health and safety of staff and customers in line with current health and safety legislation.

Examples of measures to manage risks include:

- Frequent cleaning of surfaces that are touched regularly.
- Reminding customers about social distancing.
- Storing returned items for 72 hours before putting them back on the shop floor.

The risk assessment should be carried out in consultation with staff or trade union representatives. Retailers should share the results of the risk assessment with their workforce.

The Health and Safety Executive provides guidance about how to carry out risk assessments at www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm.

Social distancing

Retailers should take the following steps to manage social distancing outside and inside the store.

Outside the store

- Limit the number of entrances and exits, and try to keep entrance and exit points separate.
- Encourage customers to shop alone if possible.
- Limit the number of customers in the store at any one time.
- Where necessary, liaise with nearby businesses about procedures to manage queues.
- Place markings to help customers maintain social distancing when queueing.
- Consider whether barriers and/or security staff are needed to manage queues.
- Display clear signs about the social distancing measures customers should follow in the store.
- Display a notice to inform customers and staff that the shop is following government guidance.
- Remind customers that wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets is mandatory from 24 July. Children under 11 and those with certain disabilities will be exempt.

Inside the store

- Provide handwashing facilities at entrance and exit points.
- Regularly remind staff and customers of social distancing guidelines.

- Review store layout. For example, widen narrow aisles and shut tills that are close together.
- Consider setting up a one-way system with floor markings.
- Limit lift occupancy levels to avoid crowding.
- Put up flexiplastic barriers at till points to protect staff working on tills.
- Encourage cashless payments.
- Regularly clean self-checkout touch screens and keypads if still in use.
- Use signs, covers or new display methods to limit customer handling of stock.
- Keep returns separate for 72 hours or clean them before they are displayed on the shop floor.
- Review customer collection points to ensure social distancing can be maintained.
- Set up 'no-contact' return and collection procedures for customers.

Further information

British Retail Consortium: 'Social Distancing in Retail Stores and Warehouses'

<https://brc.org.uk/news/corporate-affairs/social-distancing-in-retail-stores-and-warehouses/>

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy: 'Working Safely During Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance for People who Work in or Run Shops, Branches, Stores or Similar Environments'

www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/shops-and-branches



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