

## Getting your store ready

Know when you're allowed to open, and what policies apply

Can you return to work safely? Social distancing protocols dictate a two metre distance between people to limit the spread of COVID-19. Go through your store(s) and consider the following when building your reopening checklist.

- Maximum occupancy: set a temporary maximum occupancy limit that allows for two metres of distance between customers and employees. At no time should your store be packed full.
- Access to hand-wash or sanitiser: Ensure that your shop layout allows for customers and employees to frequently sanitise their hands before touching merchandise.
- Lifts and escalators: set limits on how many people can use these at once if you have them in your store, appoint an employee to ensure these limits are being followed, and provide hand sanitiser at convenient points to help reduce the risk of infection.
- Traffic flow: Consider how customer move through your shop, and find ways to reduce congestion and prolonged close contact e.g. queue markers or a one way system.
- Fitting rooms: Official government guidelines suggest keeping fitting rooms closed 'given the challenges in operating them safely.' If you do wish to open your fitting rooms, set limits on how many can be used at once and implement thorough cleaning protocols after every customer. To ensure you have the capabilities to segregate and clean every item a customer tries on and does not purchase, either store handled items in a separate room for 72 hours or make sure they're thoroughly clean before going back amongst other merchandise.
- High-contact products: how often do customers touch products while browsing your store? You may want to consider having employees bring products to customers instead of allowing them to freely browse.

## Clean and maintain your store

If you haven't been to your store for a while, time to give it a touch-up!

- Evaluate mechanical, ventilation, water and gas systems as applicable: ensure nothing has gone wrong or needs maintenance. Be thorough—you don't want your employees to deal with a mechanical emergency while trying to work safely.
- Thoroughly clean your store top-to-bottom: before any employees arrive for their first shifts, you should scrub your store down.
- Frequently clean surfaces that are touched regularly, such a self-service checkouts, trollies etc.

## Update your signage

In addition to legal requirements, customers may feel safer shopping from you if you clearly communicate your policies and safety measures before they even step in the door. Signage should include:

- Occupancy limits: clearly indicate how many customers are available in the store at a time, and what time limit customers have in store (if applicable). Clearly communicate the two metre social distancing rule too.
- Alternative shopping methods: offering pick-up at the curb? Got your online store going? Consider signage clearly stating how customers can shop with you if they don't want to come inside.
- Cleaning methods: consider clearly posting your cleaning regime to help customers feel safe shopping with you.
- Reminders: It's going to be hard for your customers to break out of old habits, many will walk into your store and feel compelled to touch the merchandise, like they were used to doing before. Placing friendly notices throughout your shop, reminding customers to avoid contact where possible, is enough to help customers stay vigilant

## Have a plan for suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19

There may come a time when an employee of yours is exposed to COVID-19, whether on the job or otherwise. Swiftly addressing these cases while respecting your employee's legal rights to anonymity is crucial.

- Implement screening measures: consider temperature checks and self-assessment questionnaires. Encourage your employees to report symptoms and make it clear being symptomatic will not cost them their job.
- Communicate quarantine policies: employees with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 should not be required to return to work until they've been cleared of the virus. Ensure all employees know this. You can reclaim employee statutory sick pay if your employee had to take time off work for COVID-19 related reason – make sure you read up on the [Coronavirus Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme](#)
- Know your legal rights and responsibilities: if an employee has been exposed to COVID-19, immediately consult local public health authorities for guidance on the next steps.