



Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Retail Businesses Offering In-Store Shopping or Services During COVID-19

July 18, 2020

AUDIENCE: Businesses that offer in-store retail, services, and outdoor equipment rental during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BACKGROUND: On June 15, 2020, Health Officer Directive 2020-17 authorized In-Store Retail. This document was revised on July 13, 2020, when Health Order C19-07f allowed reusable bags. This document was revised July 18, 2020, to reflect an amendment to Health Order C19-07f temporarily closing Indoor Shopping Centers to in-store retail.

PURPOSE: This document highlights the main points of the Directive, and steps you should take to safely reopen your business in compliance with the Directive.

Prepare: Before Your Business Re-Opens

Create a Health and Safety Plan and a Social Distancing Protocol

A template [Health and Safety Plan](#) can be found at Exhibit B of Directive 2020-17, posted at www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp. This must be available for all personnel, and posted at the entrance to the office site. If other Directives apply to your business, you may need to complete more than one Health and Safety Plan.

A template [Social Distancing Protocol](#) can be found at [Appendix A of the Shelter in Place Health Order](#), posted at www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp.

These documents must be available for all personnel, and posted at the entrance to the business site. They serve as reminders of all the best practices that your business needs to follow including universal requirements such as requiring face coverings, [signage](#), enforcing six foot distances between people, and more specific things such as establishing policies for safe handling of merchandise.

Educate and Train Personnel

Personnel must be trained to implement the Social Distancing and Health Protocol and may need training on cleaning and disinfection, [screening customers for symptoms](#), and how to monitor the number of customers in the store or in line. Consider training personnel on de-escalation with customers who do not comply with policies and provide resources to employees to address anxiety, stress, and mental health. Recognize the fear in returning to work, communicate transparently, listen, and survey regularly.

Provide information on employer or government-sponsored sick leave and other benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home (see [Paid sick leave in San Francisco](#)). Remember that employees cannot be fired due to COVID-19 results or needed time off for recovery.



San Francisco Department of Public Health

Check Your Space after the Long Period of Low Usage

Check for pest infestation or harborage, and make sure all pest control measures are functioning. Perform routine maintenance on ventilation systems including air ducts and vents. If your business was closed for a long period of time, flush out the stagnant water from the plumbing lines by running water through fixtures. Detailed guidance may be found at: <https://www.sfwater.org/flushingguidance>.

Create a Safer Space

You may need to change the physical layout of your business to help social distancing for customers and personnel. Modifications to consider include designating separate entrances and exits, making aisles one-way, increasing spacing between racks or shelves, and marking spaces with tape or other decals to indicate six-foot distances.

Getting Back to Business

Follow all of the Best Practices in Exhibit A of Directive 2020-17, posted at www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp. To help compliance, you may need to ask customers to change the way they interact with your business and your products. Changes may include:

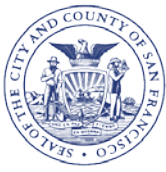
- Strongly encourage customers to refrain from touching merchandise unnecessarily and to use hand sanitizer before touching merchandise or upon entry to your business.
- Establish procedures for safe handling and cleaning of returned merchandise.
- Prohibit self-sampling of items such as cosmetics and perfume.
- Consider closing fitting rooms to customers if you can't implement best practices such as cleaning clothing before returning to sale and frequent cleaning of fitting rooms.
- If customers bring their own bags from home:
 - Ensure that bags are not placed directly on conveyor belts, outside of shopping carts, or any other surface where customers are served.
 - Ensure that reusable bags make no contact with employees.
 - Ensure that customers bag their own merchandise.
 - Ensure that customers do not bag merchandise in the checkout area if they cannot maintain physical distancing.
 - Increase the frequency of disinfection in bagging areas and customer service areas frequented by customers.

Bathrooms for Customers

Consider closing the restroom if you are not able to comply with the sanitation requirements of the Social Distancing and Health Protocol. Businesses are encouraged to monitor use of restrooms by either requiring a key to access or stationing a bathroom attendant nearby.

Retail Stores in an Enclosed Indoor Shopping Center (UPDATED)

Retail stores in an enclosed Indoor Shopping Center that do not have direct access to adjacent sidewalk, street, parking lot, or alley area, are not allowed to be open to the public for in-store retail at this time. This includes Indoor Shopping Centers that have previously obtained approval from the Health Officer.



Monitoring and Adjusting

At least on a weekly basis, think about how your business and personnel are doing, how well you are complying with your Social Distancing and Health Plan, and what changes are needed to improve your response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Look for new guidance from the [SFDPH Communicable Disease Control and Prevention](#) or the frequently updated page on sf.gov with [comprehensive resources for businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What businesses are permitted to reopen?

All retail establishments other than those inside enclosed Shopping Centers are permitted to open. Such businesses include:

- Bookstores
- Jewelry stores
- Toy stores
- Clothing and shoe stores
- Home and furnishing stores
- Sporting goods stores
- Florists
- Second hand stores
- Other retailers selling goods

Q: What businesses are not yet permitted to reopen?

Retail stores inside Shopping Centers that have not obtained approval from the Health Officer may not open. Personal services are not permitted to reopen at this time; stay up to date for industry-specific guidance for reopening services. Personal services include:

- Beauty salons
- Nail salons
- Massage practitioner
- Body art practitioner

Q: Should my staff wear gloves?

Routine glove use is not recommended. The CDC explains that in general, gloves are appropriate when cleaning or caring for someone who is sick (see link: [When to wear gloves](#)). In most other situations, wearing gloves is not necessary and may still lead to the spread of germs. The best way to protect yourself is to regularly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.



Resources

Local:

[Downloadable signage to print yourself](#), or to request [printed posters](#)

How to get tested for COVID-19 in San Francisco <https://sf.gov/citytestsf>

Information from the [San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development about COVID-19](#), such as employer requirements, employee benefits, and resources; [Avoiding discrimination and retaliation during COVID-19](#).

[Paid sick leave in San Francisco](#)

California:

[State of California Resilience Roadmap](#)

[Guidance for Retailers](#) from the State of California

CAL OSHA [information on protecting workers from COVID-19](#)

National:

CDC: Resuming Business Toolkit: [CDC Resuming Business Toolkit](#)

[CDC Return to Work Guidance](#)

International:

[International Council of Shopping Centers \(ICSC\): COVID-19 Re-Opening Best Practices](#)