



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Housing and
Economic Development

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GUIDANCE REGARDING THE OPERATION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

On March 23, 2020, the Governor issued an Order Assuring Continued Operation of Essential Services in the Commonwealth. On March 31, 2020, the Governor extended that Order and updated the list of “COVID-19 Essential Services.”

The Order designated certain services as essential, allowing some employers to continue operations at this time. Both public-facing and private services that remain open should implement certain practices and procedures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Businesses that have been deemed essential and are open to the public should deploy strategies to reduce COVID-19 exposure for their customers and employees including but not limited to:

- Access to handwashing facilities, including those available in public restrooms, and allowing employees sufficient break time to wash hands, as necessary.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, as available.
- Disinfecting wipes, as available, at point of entrance for customers to disinfect carts, at cash registers and/or other appropriate locations.
- Procedures to ensure that both employees and customers remain at least six feet apart at all times. Procedures should include a marked “Social Distancing Line,” which begins six feet away from all checkout counters.
- Procedures to sanitize frequent touchpoints throughout the day, including point of sale terminals at registers.
- Employees who are sick should not report to work. If, when reporting to work, employees have symptoms of COVID-19, they must be sent home.
- Adoption of remote sales methods for some transactions, including phone orders, online sales, delivery, and email-based transactions.
- Offering of on-site pick-up options such as “curbside” product drops in parking lots in which materials are loaded into customers’ trunks, truck beds or cargo areas. In no circumstances may an employee place any product into the cab or passenger area of a customer’s vehicle.

- Employees should not perform bagging of products if reusable checkout bags are used and customers should not use reusable checkout bags.
- Stores should be closed to the public for a sufficient time each evening to allow for proper sanitization.

All businesses that offer essential services, including those that are not open to the public, should implement practices to reduce exposure to COVID-19 including but not limited to:

- Access to handwashing facilities, including those available in public restrooms, and allowing employees sufficient break time to wash hands, as necessary.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, as available.
- Ensure work spaces are at least six feet apart.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment.
- Establish alternating days or extra shifts that reduce the total number of employees in a facility at a given time, allowing them to maintain distance from one another while maintaining a full onsite work week.
- Employees who are sick should not report to work. If, when reporting to work, employees have symptoms of COVID-19, they must be sent home.

If you have any questions regarding these procedures, or if you would like to suggest additional best practices, please contact the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development at covid19.biz@mass.gov.