



# **COVID-19 Re-Opening Best Practices**

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ICSC continues to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak on behalf of the retail real estate industry and our members. Communities are responding to the pandemic under various local, state and federal restrictions, many of which present unique challenges for both retailers and landlords.

The situation remains fluid with certain areas less impacted than others. This means that some states may begin the process of reopening businesses sooner than other states. The following are general recommendations for you to consider when it comes time for your store or property to reopen. They should be used in conjunction with any guidelines or mandates in place within your locale.

### Planning

- Establish clear objectives and priorities for your store or property.
- Develop a plan for your reopening, including as much input from local and health officials, tenants, landlords and other stakeholders.
  - Consider the safety of staff, tenants and visitors in your plan.
- Be prepared should a second wave of COVID-19 outbreak occur in your area.
- Consider whether hours of operation should be amended.
- Provide employee training on sanitation procedures, managing customer concerns, social distancing standards, etc.
- Consider screening/testing measures such as temperature checks, symptom checks, virus and/or antibody testing, etc.

### Communication

- Once your reopening date is known, communicate it to all relevant parties.
- Communicate with relevant stakeholders about the current status of COVID-19 in your area, your reopening plans, and the actions you are taking to ensure the safety of patrons.
- Landlords and tenants should communicate often in order to detect any issues that could arise before and after reopening.
- Place communications with rules and guidelines related to COVID-19 within the store or property. Display CDC public service announcements at entrances and throughout the property.
- Distribute communications to tenants outlining basic CDC recommendations or local government instructions.
- Landlords and tenants should work together to share relevant information related to health and safety on their social media channels.

### Landlords/Center Management

- Consider common area adjustments to determine whether children's play areas should be open, if seating needs to be rearranged or furniture removed to accommodate social distancing, etc.
- Upgrade cleaning and hygiene practices:
  - Increase cleaning frequency and focus on disinfecting areas most susceptible to the spread of viral germs; for example, children's play areas; public restrooms;

rental strollers and wheelchairs; door handles, escalator handrails, food court tables; and any other places the public commonly touches.

- Install and maintain alcohol-based, hand-cleaning dispensers in locations where the spread of germs is likely and normal soap-and-water handwashing stations are not readily available.
- Determine whether you will provide facial masks and/or gloves to patrons for use while in-store or on the property.
- Consider your staffing levels:
  - What are your general expectations for crowds when you reopen?
  - Are you changing your hours of operations?
  - Do staffing levels need to be lower than pre-pandemic?
  - Are you doing anything to increase the visibility of your cleaning staff? Or your cleaning practices?
- Consider traffic flow and occupancy limitations:
  - Should walking patterns be changed to be one way?
  - Does the number of entrances need to be limited to control occupancy?
  - Are you making any changes to parking to accommodate curbside pickup? Will these changes be short-term or long-term?
  - How are you managing tenants' requests to help with social distancing and/or queuing requirements?
- Determine whether to make announcements over the PA system detailing the precautions being taken to keep patrons safe.
- Consider if space is available and should be dedicated to curbside pickup, BOPIS, etc.
- Encourage employees who are sick to stay home.

### Technical Systems

- Fire Safety
  - Test fire safety system
  - Verify all emergency exits and escape routes are unimpeded and functional
- Security Systems
  - Check cameras for functionality
  - Check alarm systems for functionality
- Other
  - Ready mechanical and HVAC systems
  - Flush potable water system
  - Check sewage functionality, including grease traps
  - Test all restrooms
  - Check functionality of any elevators and escalators

### Retail Tenants

- Plan for goods delivery and storage if temporarily needed as well as how inventory and deliveries will be disinfected. Additionally, plan for how packages to be shipped will be handled.
- If the number of customers is restricted in stores, prepare and display a communication.
- Consider creating a one-way traffic flow through the store.
- Place floor stickers for social distancing queuing and consider mounting plexiglass sheets at checkouts for additional protection.

- Encourage customers to respect social distancing, either through floor stickers or other communications located within the store.
- Determine whether you will provide facial masks and/or gloves to patrons for use while in-store.
- Plan for how returns or exchanges will be handled from customer to associate.
- Create procedures for how fitting rooms will be sanitized between customer use.
- Frequently clean high-touch areas such as counters, door handles and product displays.
- Will any new technology be integrated to create opportunities for customers to retrieve purchases either in a designated location or curbside?
- Consider contactless payments options such as RFID cards, Apple Pay, self-checkout, and online purchase to be picked up at a designated location or delivered to customer's home.
- Consider your staffing levels:
  - What are your general expectations for crowds when you open?
  - Are you changing your hours of operations?
  - Do staffing levels need to be lower than pre-pandemic?

### Restaurant Tenants

- Conduct a pre-shift health check of every employee.
- Certify every staff member in food safety, with a certified manager on duty for each shift.
- Consider using disposable utensils, placemats, condiment packages and menus, or sanitize all items after each use.
- Encourage frequent handwashing by employees and/or make hand sanitizer available to all employees.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces frequently.
- Consider contactless payments options such as RFID cards, Apple Pay, self-checkout, and online purchase to be picked up at a designated location or delivered to customer's home.
- If the number of customers is restricted in the restaurant, prepare and display a communication.  
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- Observe health officials' social distancing recommendations.

For more information, please refer to the [CDC website](#) for updates and additional recommendations.

ICSC urges members to continue to maintain a high level of sanitation at all times in order to minimize the possible outbreak or spread of infection. We also encourage members to stay informed and to develop strategies and precautionary measures to protect the health and safety of their employees and customers.

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