



HOLIDAY ADVISORY FOR RETAILERS DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

As of November 24, 2020

Advisory

Winter holiday activities, such as shopping and social gatherings, present a risk of COVID-19 spread to New Yorkers, particularly within areas of the state where confirmed cases and clusters have recently increased. This advisory is issued to remind New York's retail businesses of the public health measures that remain in effect for their operations during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency and to urge all New Yorkers to follow health precautions by avoiding crowds, wearing a face covering in public, and staying home if they feel sick.

Through the *New York Forward* initiative, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) established data-driven, science-based precautions and protocols for each industry, which has helped reduced community spread of the virus during the reopening of the economy. Owners and operators of retail businesses are responsible for following State-issued executive orders, regulations, and guidance applicable to retail activities. Retailers are also accountable for the ensuring customers do not jeopardize public health by crowding on the premises, in violation of capacity or social distancing requirements, which has greater potential to occur on peak shopping days (e.g., Black Friday).

Further, the DOH "[Interim Guidance for Retail Business Activities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" requires retailers to:

- **Limit capacity** to no more than 50% of the maximum occupancy for the store
- **Maintain appropriate social distancing** of six feet among individuals, unless individuals are members of the same household, or safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance
- **Ensure that acceptable face coverings are worn**, and customers are only permitted entry if they are wearing a face covering, so long as they are over the age of two and able to medically tolerate the covering
- **Provide hand hygiene stations**, such as hand washing (e.g., soap, warm running water, hand drying supplies) and hand sanitizing (e.g., alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% or more alcohol)
- **Regularly clean and disinfect**, focusing on high-traffic areas (e.g., restrooms), frequently touched surfaces (e.g., service counters), and shared equipment (e.g., carts/baskets)
- **Post signage** informing customers of health precautions (e.g., face coverings, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene) and **distance markers** indicating six-foot spaces in areas where lines form or people congregate
- **Reduce touch points on retail products** by encouraging customers to touch only products they will be buying
- **Encourage the use of touchless payment or pay ahead options**, when available, and minimize handling cash, credit cards, reward cards, and mobile devices, where possible
- **Consider remote shopping alternatives** for customers, including click-and-collect, shop-by-phone, delivery, and curbside or in-store pick-up to reduce the number of customers in the store

Given the risk posed by a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, New York's business owners and customers must be vigilant this season and ensure that the public health safeguards are followed to prevent and reduce the spread of this deadly virus.

Resources

- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>