

Indiana Retail Council
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State of Indiana
Office of the Governor
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Task force members:

On behalf of the Indiana Retail Council (IRC), I thank you and your team for your leadership during these difficult times. Please know that IRC members are closely following health and safety guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and working hard every hour to keep Hoosiers healthy & well-supplied throughout the state of emergency. Retailers have invested heavily over a very short period in several new measures and adopted new operational procedures to support public health and safety. These efforts – some of which go above and beyond the mandates in the Executive Orders – are being conducted to ensure that customers and employees are safe and that they are doing their part to flatten the curve. Retailers have taken unprecedented steps to protect employees and ensure customers are acting responsibly in stores.

IRC submits the following for your thoughtful consideration and stands ready to work with you to implement the steps needed to get Indiana's retail economy active and thriving once again.

INCREASED SANITATION PROTOCOLS AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Reduced store hours to allow for enhanced deep cleaning and to provide adequate time for product restocking without customer demands.
- Increased cleaning protocols that follow CDC guidelines including but not limited to sanitizing check-out lanes after every guest transaction, "Clean Cart" protocols, additional cleaning of breakrooms, regular deep cleanings, and additional hand sanitizer in high traffic areas.
- Installation of plexiglass "sneeze guards."
- Require employees to practice frequent hand washing and/or provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Staggering breaks, within compliance with wage and hour regulations, to maintain social distancing protocols.
- Allow employees to utilize cloth facial coverings.

CONSUMER AND ASSOCIATE PROTECTION

- Implementation of daily employee health screenings with thermometers and requiring all employees to stay home if they or a family member is not feeling well.
- Establish policies and procedures in accordance with CDC recommendations to follow if an employee tests positive for COVID-19.
- Impose metering of 5 customers per 1,000 square feet of the space the business occupies or no less than 50% of mercantile occupancy for the space the business occupies under the International Fire Code - exclusive of employees. More narrow restrictions may result in long lines forming that would require crowd management and/or the assistance of local law enforcement.
- Dedicate staff to direct guests as they queue up, shop in the store, and check-out.
- Signage outlining required social distancing of 6'. Whenever possible, signage should be supplemented by other methods such as periodic announcements over a PA system.
- Social distancing floor decals and other metering techniques to adhere to CDC recommendations on social distancing. These techniques should be employed both inside and outside the store where customers queue.
- Dedicate shopping hours for the elderly and medically vulnerable populations.
- Dedicate shopping hours for essential personnel.
- Pause the use of "self-service" food stations, including soup bars, salad bars, etc.
- In-store food service take-out only.
- Increased pickup and delivery service options such as contactless curbside and delivery window for customers to help minimize contact and maintain social distancing.
- Use a single, clearly designated entrance and another clearly designated exit at each store to help maintain social distancing and lessen the instances of people closely passing each other.
- Disable and/or cover water fountains.
- Encourage use of cashless payment methods.
- Encourage use of self-checkout lanes (if available).
- Encourage consumers follow a one person per cart policy.
- Encourage customers to wear face coverings or masks when shopping.
- Consider policies to limit returns and exchanges and notify customers of such policies.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL WORKPLACES

- Ample COVID-19 testing capacity must be available across the state at multiple, accessible locations including drive through locations and pharmacies to support community and workplace safety.
- First responder status for retail sector employees to prioritize testing for employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Public assistance may be needed to procure PPE supplies for businesses to purchase, particularly sanitizer, disinfectant, masks and temperature scanners.
- Liability protections against COVID-19 lawsuits should be extended to businesses that adhere to established protocols from state authorities.

- Consistent Statewide Regulations for Reopening are necessary to provide direction for essential businesses and businesses that will be re-opening. Variation in local measures related to public health and safety poses significant challenges, particularly for multi-jurisdictional employers that are already in the midst of navigating a difficult and evolving crisis situation. In addition, this disparity creates confusion as employers struggle to understand and comply with an emerging patchwork of laws. Therefore, as businesses re-open, we urge the State to issue one set of COVID-19 rules, regulations and/or guidelines, in conjunction with the business community and local governments. Further, the State should prevent the proliferation of local measures that stand to put public health at greater risk due to confusion and lack of clear guidance.

I am very proud to say that IRC member companies are putting forth extraordinary efforts across the state to meet an unprecedented demand for food and other critical products. Ensuring the safety of Indiana residents will require continued cooperation between governments, consumers, retail workers, healthcare workers and law enforcement. As retailers' ability to control customer behavior is limited, a partnership between the state and retailers on a sustained, social distancing public awareness campaign is paramount to ensure success in this endeavor.

Rest assured the members of the Indiana Retail Council continue to do our part by working with you to ensure the safety of the people of Indiana.

Sincerely,

Melissa L. Coxey, President