Reopening your retail store after COVID-19

Checklists by retail sector/activity
How-to guides to:

• Recall employees
• Conduct employee health screenings
• Utilize the Work Share Program
• Reengage customers
An open letter to retailers

Checklist for all open businesses

Checklist for open retail in Northern Michigan

Checklist for retail by appointment and retail-to-go

Checklist for food establishments and pharmacies

How-to recall employees to work

How-to utilize the Work Share Program

Understanding COVID-related unemployment

Other benefits employees are eligible for

How-to create employee health screening guides

How-to rethink your store and reengage customers
Dear retailer,

These are unprecedented times. No one could have imagined we’d be in the situation we are now. We know many of you are frustrated and anxious to get back to work to protect your livelihood.

Retailers have already proven they can keep their employees and customers safe. We are proud of the grocery stores, pharmacies and hardware stores that never closed their doors and quickly developed and implemented best practices that we’re now using as guidance for reopening all retail stores.

We want to say a special thank you to those retail workers and suppliers who have kept Michiganders supplied with food, medication and supplies. We would not have survived this challenging time without their hard work and dedication.

But we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

As the state allows retailers to reopen their doors, we’ve compiled relevant information in this guide to try to make it easier for you to comply with the many new health and safety requirements. The Governor’s Orders require many safety precautions prior to opening. If you aren’t ready to open your doors, that’s ok. Wait until you are ready and can open safely. What’s important and what we strongly encourage is that you take the time to implement the safety precautions properly.

These requirements will be enforced by the new COVID-19 Office of Worker Safety within the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA). The agency is tasked with enforcing and monitoring workplaces for compliance and posting information on businesses that do not comply. So we urge you to pay careful attention to the many new requirements and follow them as closely as you can.

Stores will be selling in new and different ways which changes the shopping experience for customers too. First and foremost, we know you want to keep your employees safe. Now is a great time to review de-escalation tactics should they be confronted with agitated customers. We also encourage you to prepare for the potential that there could be a second wave. Consider developing more of an online presence and alternatives to in-person shopping.

If you have questions about reopening or government requirements, email us at AskUsFirst@retailers.com.

Michigan Retailers Association has not stopped advocating for you throughout this crisis and we will not stop even once this is over. We are with you and we stand ready to help our members and retailers across the state as we move into this next phase of reopening.

William J. Hallan
President and CEO
Michigan Retailers Association
Reopening retail checklist

Government requirements:
ALL OPEN BUSINESSES conducting in-person work must (in addition to any industry-specific guidance):

General operations:
☐ Promote remote work to the fullest extent possible.
☐ Restrict business travel to essential travel only.
☐ Develop a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan (see MRA template), consistent with OSHA’s Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19.
  ☐ Make this plan available by June 1, 2020, or within two weeks of resuming in-person activities, whichever is later, to employees, labor unions and customers (via website, internal network or paper).
☐ Establish a response plan to handle confirmed infection in the workplace, including protocols for sending employees home and for temporary closures to allow for deep cleaning.
☐ Adopt any additional infection-control measures for the type of work performed at the worksite and the rate of infection in the surrounding community.

Personal protective equipment (PPE):
☐ Provide non-medical face coverings to all employees.
☐ Require face coverings to be worn when 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained, and consider face shields when employees cannot consistently maintain 6 feet of separation from other individuals.

Enhanced cleaning standards:
☐ Increase facility cleaning and disinfection to limit exposure to COVID-19, focusing on high-touch surfaces, products and equipment.
☐ Adopt protocols to clean and disinfect the facility in the event of a positive COVID-19 case in the workplace.
☐ Provide employees access to cleaning supplies upon entry and time to wash hands/use hand sanitizer.

Social distancing:
☐ Keep everyone at least 6 feet from one another through the use of ground markings, signs and physical barriers, as appropriate.

Employees:
☐ Designate and inform employees who can return to work in writing (can be via email or on your website).
☐ Provide COVID-19 training to employees on:
  • Workplace infection-control practices.
  • Proper use of personal protective equipment.
  • Steps the employee must take to notify the business or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis.
  • How to report unsafe working conditions.
☐ Designate one or more worksite supervisors to implement, monitor, and report on the COVID-19 control strategies in the preparedness and response plan. A supervisor (or designated employee) must remain on-site when employees are present.
☐ Encourage employees to use PPE and hand sanitizer on public transportation.
☐ Conduct a daily entry self-screening protocol for all employees or contractors entering the workplace, including, at a minimum, a questionnaire covering symptoms and suspected or confirmed exposure to people with possible COVID-19.
☐ When an employee is identified with a confirmed case of COVID-19, within 24 hours, notify both the local public health department and any co-workers, contractors, or suppliers who may have come into contact with the person.
☐ Do not discharge, discipline or otherwise retaliate against employees who stay home or who leave work when they are at particular risk of infecting others with COVID-19.
Government requirements:
RETAIL IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN
Open retail in Michigan’s Economic Recovery Council Regions 6 & 8

Social distancing:
- Design spaces and store activities in a manner that encourages employees and customers to maintain 6 feet of distance from one another.
- Establish lines and social distancing markers to keep customers at least 6 feet apart from one another while waiting.
- Install physical barriers at checkout or other service points that require interaction (plexiglass barriers, tape markers or tables).
- Establish capacity limits (see chart below).

Enhanced cleaning/disinfecting procedures:
- Establish a cleaning and sanitizing protocol for high-touch areas like restrooms, credit-card machines, key pads, counters, shopping carts and other surfaces.

Employees:
- Limit staffing to the minimum necessary.
- Train employees on:
  - Cleaning procedures including training for cashiers on cleaning between customers.
  - How to manage symptomatic customers upon entry to or in the store.
- Notify employees if the employer learns that an individual (including a customer or supplier) with a confirmed case of COVID-19 has visited the store.

Customer signage/communications:
- Post signs at store entrance(s) instructing customers of their legal obligation to wear a face covering when inside the store.
- Post signs at store entrance(s) informing customers not to enter if they are or have recently been sick.
- Create communications material for customers (e.g., signs or pamphlets) to inform them of changes to store practices and to explain the precautions the store is taking to prevent infection.

### Michigan Customer Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stores with less than 50,000 square feet</th>
<th>Stores over 50,000 square feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25% fire code occupancy*</td>
<td>4 persons per 1,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Square footage of building</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Fire Code (30 sq ft pp)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>1,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>1,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>3,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes employees in capacity limits
** does not include employees in capacity limits
Follow all requirements for open businesses listed on page 2 of this document.

Follow all requirements for retail stores in regions 6 and 8 listed on page 3 of this document.

Only allow 10 customers in the store at a time.

The order doesn’t define what “by appointment” means, so walk-in or walk-up appointments are allowed. It doesn’t necessarily mean customers have to call ahead and schedule a time to shop. There is a limit restricting the total number of customers to 10 in a store at one time. Implement what you feel comfortable doing whether that’s having a greeter at the door limiting customers or having customers call the store and admitting them if capacity remains. Consider how to offer vulnerable citizens special shopping considerations.

Ideas to try:

• Promote scheduled, intimate small group shopping experiences or store “take overs” for friends, families, coworkers or clubs looking to get together in a new way.
• Create themed days or promotions.
• Institute a retail fast-pass for your best customers, giving them more immediate access or preferred time slots to shop new merchandise and sales.

Government requirements:

RETAIL BY APPOINTMENT

As of May 26, retailers throughout Michigan, if not allowed to open fully, may do retail by “appointment.”

RETAIL-TO-GO/CURBSIDE

As of April 24, retailers can do curbside transactions and pick-ups as well as fulfill home or mail order deliveries from their stores.

Ideas to try:

• Host interactive merchandise reveals on Zoom, Facebook Live or other video platforms.
• Show existing customers and new customers different ways to use your products. Make it interactive and fun while providing a demo or more information than they would otherwise get. Make it a memorable experience.

Plan for the next “what if:”

Review how you would handle this closure and pandemic if you had the chance to re-do it. While we hope there are no additional waves, take the time now to boost your online presence and consider creating a real online store and other tools to better help you weather the next storm. Retailers should also build strong relationships to help you better negotiate with landlords, bankers, vendors, employees, local law enforcement and of course your customers.
Government requirements: FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS AND PHARMACIES

General operations:

☐ Grocery stores and pharmacies must provide at least 2 hours of designated shopping hours each week for vulnerable populations (seniors age 60+, pregnant women, those with chronic conditions).
☐ Customers must wear a face covering to enter (if they can medically tolerate it).
☐ Provide access to handwashing facilities (public restrooms count).
☐ Close self-serve prepared food stations (e.g. salad bars).
☐ Eliminate free samples and tasting stations.
☐ Close to the public for sufficient time each night to allow stores to be properly sanitized.
☐ Encourage cash transactions to be processed at self-checkout kiosks when possible.
☐ Ensure vendors are cleaning and disinfecting frequent touch points.

Enhanced cleaning standards:

☐ Clean and disinfect frequent touchpoints throughout the day such as point of sale terminals at registers, shopping carts, shopping baskets, bulk bins, etc.
☐ Use best efforts to ensure checkout employees disinfect their hands between orders.
☐ Use best efforts to provide employees and customers access to at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
☐ Use best efforts to provide disinfecting wipes at cash registers and entrance points for customers to disinfect carts and baskets, and where needed.

Social distancing:

☐ Ensure that both employees and customers remain at least 6 feet apart to the maximum extent possible, including during employee breaks (review floor plans, create temporary barriers, designate aisles as one-way only, and use floor decals where lines occur).

Employees:

☐ Require checkout employees to wear face coverings.
☐ Allow employees sufficient break time to wash hands.
☐ Accommodate employees who fall within a vulnerable population by providing lower-exposure work assignments or giving them the option to take an unpaid leave of absence with a return date coinciding with the end of the declared states of emergency and disaster.
☐ Develop and implement a daily screening program for all staff upon or just prior to reporting to work sites (see pg 8 of this guide on how to screen employees).
☐ Prohibit employees who are sick from reporting to work and send employees home if they display symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive.

Handling exposure/positive tests:

- Employees exposed to someone with COVID-19 may continue to report to work if:
  - Their temperature is taken daily.
  - They stay 6 feet away from other employees and customers.
  - The business cleans and disinfects all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas and shared electronic equipment routinely known to be impacted by the exposed employee for 14 days after last exposure.
- If an employee at a food-selling establishment tests positive for COVID-19, the establishment must:
  - Notify vendors and other employees of the positive test result as soon as possible no later than 12 hours after receiving the test result, without revealing personal health information.
How-to:
RECALL YOUR EMPLOYEES BACK TO WORK
You’ve prepared the workplace, now prepare your employees.

Step 1: Provide formal, written notice
When the decision is made to return your employees to work, you should provide formal notice, in writing, that the furlough, layoff, or employment without reporting status is over and that they are expected to return to work as scheduled. If your business operates on a regularly changing work schedule, you should also provide an updated schedule.

Require employees to acknowledge receipt of the notice and updated schedule. This is your documentation should the employee refuse to return.

Step 2: Proactively address potential concerns
The notice in step one should also outline mitigation efforts that have been put in place to keep employees safe. Inform them they can review the required COVID-19 preparedness and response plan (once it’s ready) for details. If they’re still concerned, ask them what steps they might recommend to feel safer and seriously consider implementing those suggestions if reasonable.

In addition to ensuring a safe environment, you may also consider working with the employee to identify job duties that they may be more comfortable with, explore limited or reduced hours, taking advantage of the state of Michigan’s Work Share Program, or review any remote work opportunities. Proper enactment of safety measures, and letting your employees know what you have implemented, can go a long way to alleviating concerns.

Step 3: Consider utilizing the state’s Work Share Program
You may be concerned that workers may not want to return because of potential for a short-term financial windfall due to the Federal CARES Act. The CARES Act extended unemployment benefits from 26 to 39 weeks and added $600 a week in federal benefits.

The state’s Work Share Program allows employers to bring back most or all of their employees while reducing the hours worked thereby lowering payroll. Under the program, employees would remain eligible for partial unemployment plus the additional $600 from the federal government (see more information on page 7).

Step 4: Decide whether to challenge unemployment claims
Employees who do have their position available to them cannot refuse and qualify, or remain qualified, for unemployment. While the requirement to seek work was temporarily waived, the return to available work requirement was not. Mere fear of the virus is not a legitimate reason to refuse to come to work and remain employed or, if furloughed or terminated, remain eligible for unemployment benefits.

The unfortunate end game is that you will need to decide if you want to challenge an unemployment claim. During this unique challenge, it is advisable to undertake a number of common-sense best practices. First, you should document all interactions with the employee. Ideally, this would occur in real time rather than having to recall interactions from memory, but COVID-19 did not give us advance warning that these issues would emerge. If you haven’t kept records to this point, now is a very good time to start.

Second, in addition to the notice referenced above, you should clearly communicate to your employee, in writing, that you have work available and that you will be challenging an unemployment claim. This will give the employee an opportunity to explain their position, and perhaps cause you to reconsider if there were facts you were unaware of.

Third, be objective in your view of the situation. It is likely that the administrative hearings system will be favorable towards the employee. You should consider this in assessing your approach to the situation.

Finally, be flexible and not afraid to think outside of the box. Retailers everywhere are brainstorming ways to reinvent themselves in this time of crisis. That reinvention can extend to the way you work with your employees to resolve issues.
As a result of Gov. Whitmer’s Executive Order, Michigan’s Work Share program eligibility requirements have been expanded:

- If business demand is down, employers participating in Work Share can preserve their workforce while reducing hours and wages by 10 - 60%.
- Waived the length of time requirement that employers must be in business and open/operating.
- Waived the requirement that employers NOT have a previous history of layoffs.
- Waived the requirement that employers have a current or positive balance with UIA.

How-to: UTILIZE THE WORK SHARE PROGRAM

Know your options.

For more information or to apply visit michigan.gov/workshare or call 1-855-484-2636.

LEGITIMATE REASONS EMPLOYEES CAN CONTINUE RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT

Know your employees rights.

An individual must be considered to have left work involuntarily for medical reasons if that individual leaves work for any of the following reasons:

- Workers with a family care responsibility as a result of a government directive, like childcare due to school closures or caring for a loved one who has COVID-19.
- Workers who are sick with COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, atypical cough, and atypical shortness of breath).
- Workers who have had contact in the last 14 days with someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19.
- Workers under self-isolation or self-quarantine in response to elevated risk from COVID-19 due to being immuno-compromised.

OTHER BENEFITS YOUR EMPLOYEES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THROUGHOUT 2020

Know your responsibilities as an employer.

Emergency Paid Sick Leave under the FFCRA

- All companies with under 500 employees must provide eligible employees (same reasons as those eligible for unemployment) with 80 hours (10 days) of paid sick leave related to coronavirus.
- This paid leave is in addition to any existing paid leave policies.
- Benefits paid are eligible for tax credits on employers quarterly payroll taxes.

Emergency Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) coverage

- All companies with under 500 employees must provide eligible employees with 12 total weeks of leave (first two weeks are unpaid, next 10 weeks are paid) emergency family medical leave.
- Employees are eligible if they are unable to work (or telework) because they have a son or daughter under 18 who requires care due to school closures or childcare-related closures (paid childcare facilities) due to coronavirus.

Both laws include provisions to allow the U.S. Secretary of Labor to exempt employers with fewer than 50 employees from the requirements if it would jeopardize the viability of the business.
State orders and many local county health departments require employers to develop and implement a daily screening program for all staff upon or just prior to reporting to work sites. The goal is to prohibit employees who are sick or may have been exposed from reporting to work and send employees home if they display symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive.

**DAILY EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROCEDURES MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

1. **Do you have any of the following symptoms?**
   - **Y** N Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher (as measured by a touchless thermometer if available, but a verbal confirmation of lack of fever is sufficient if a touchless thermometer is not available).
   - **Y** N Cough (excluding chronic cough due to a known medical reason other than COVID-19).
   - **Y** N Shortness of breath.
   - **Y** N Sore throat.
   - **Y** N Diarrhea (excluding diarrhea due to a known medical reason other than COVID-19).

2. **Have you traveled internationally or outside of Michigan in the last 14 days?** (This excludes commuting from a non-vacation home located outside of Michigan.)
   - **Y** N

3. **Have you had any close contact in the last 14 days with someone with a diagnosis of COVID-19?**
   - **Y** N

**Affirmative answers to screening questions #1 on symptoms of COVID-19 or #2 travel:**

Employee must stay home for at least 72 hours with no fever (three full days of no fever without use of medicine that reduces fever) and other symptoms have improved and at least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared. Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and other licensed medical professionals are exempt from this requirement.

**Affirmative answer to screening question #3 about coming into close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19:**

Employee may be allowed to continue work at the employer’s discretion if they remain asymptomatic and the employer implements the following additional precautions to protect the employee and the community:

- Checking the employee’s temperature daily.
- Keeping the employee six feet away from other employees and customers.
- Cleaning and disinfecting all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment routinely known to be impacted by the exposed employee for 14 days after last exposure.

Some county health departments have required employers to maintain records of these health screenings and provide them upon request. If located in a county that has a requirement like this, we recommend that you assign employees a number of code, not easily identifiable by other employees, and keep the information vague. Instead of noting an employee’s exact temperature indicate whether they pass or fail a specific screening measure.

If an employee has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, they may continue to work if they have their temperature taken daily, stay six feet away from other employees and customers, and the business cleans and disinfects all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment routinely known to be impacted by the exposed employee for 14 days after last exposure.

If an employee at a food-selling establishment tests positive for COVID-19, the establishment must notify food vendors and other employees of the positive test result as soon as possible and in no case later than 12 hours after receiving the test result, without revealing the personal health-related information of any employee.
Communicate, communicate, communicate - both verbally and with nonverbal cues.

- Use signage for three reasons – to inform customers, to make customers feel safe but also set expectations.
- As things just start reopening, you need signage that screams you’re open and how people can reach you. Work with the city on parking for curbside pick-up. Cities are looking to help close streets for outdoor restaurant seating - don’t let them forget retail.
- Make sure hours and contact information is accurate when customers look for you on Google, Facebook, etc. Include your updated hours on social media channels in posts and on your phone messages. Make it obvious.
- Provide assurance. Usually cleaning happens after hours or during non-peak hours. For customers to feel safe they need to see it, so institute a non-stop wipe-down regimen. Be obvious about wiping down surfaces.
- Have signage outside telling customers what you’re doing to keep your store clean and your expectations for them. How do they do curbside, which door to enter, how many people allowed inside, etc.
- Ask customers to only touch what they buy.

Store layout: think about flow.

- Are your aisles wide enough to promote social distancing?
- Do you need to consider one-way aisles or a one-direction path guiding customers throughout the store?
- Mark any congregating spots with social distancing markers (doesn’t need to be fancy, colored tape works).
- If possible, designate one door for entry and another for exiting.

Promote distancing but still be welcoming.

- Think about how to retain a pleasant experience. Greet customers in a cheerful manner and offer/direct customers to hand sanitizer or wipes as they enter your store.
- Offer freshly sterilized pens if customers need to sign receipts and a “clean” pen cup and “dirty” pen cup.
- You’ll likely have to limit the number of customers coming through your doors for a while. That means staffing the door, or even considering hiring security guards. Don’t put your employees in a position to confront agitated customers without training.
- Set up contact-less credit card processing. (MRA offers processing services if you need help setting it up.)

Become more efficient.

- Reduce clutter. Get rid of and move out the stuff that isn’t selling. It will be one less thing to wipe down at night.
- Consider bundling products rather than selling singles (think like bags of produce at the grocery store).
- Consider alternative ways to display items customers frequently look through or touch in a hands-free way.
- Consider wrapping/packaging bulk items (coffee, nails, beads, etc) that are looked through frequently or sold by weight. Prepackage them for convenience and to avoid contamination.
- Fitting rooms - consider reducing the number, adding more limits on the number of items a customer can try on and developing methods to sanitize the fitting room areas and un-purchased items between customers.

Stock up on supplies.

- Reusable items are gone. You’ll have to go with disposables for now.
- Face coverings, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, floor decals and signs are all in high demand. Don’t wait.

Managing and retraining employees.

- Train employees to do sales while wearing a mask. They may need to be overly expressive. Role play.
• Teach them how to invite people to explore your store, rather than just ask “what are you looking for?”
• Bring employees in staggered shifts to avoid more exposure in break and backroom areas than necessary.
• Cross-train employees, in case one gets sick or is exposed.
• Train employees on de-escalation tactics while respecting the customer’s privacy. If you intend to enforce face coverings, remember there is an exemption for those medically unable to tolerate wearing one. How will you still be accessible to those customers and not be accused of discrimination? Try this: “I need you to wear a mask to protect my employees. If you can’t do that, I’m more than happy to serve you curbside.”

Promote products and sales in new ways.
• Use Facebook Live – not to show your products, but to show HOW to use your products. Do mini-demonstrations and incorporate your products into the demonstration.
• Don’t just hold up a dress; show how you approach accessorizing it. If you’re a jeweler, show what to keep in mind when mixing jewelry.
• Tell stories behind the products - who made them, where they come from, how you came to find this item or some other anecdote about a product – customers love that.
• In a nutshell: find news ways to connect deeply with customers. They’ll need that since you can’t see most of each others faces when in the store.

The big day - reopening your doors.
• Don’t plan a grand reopening. No one wants to come to a crowded open house.
• Consider small intimate gatherings.
• How can you stand out? Is it by being extra diligent in safety and handing customers face masks as they enter?
• Be very intentional about designing moments of connection so your customers get the most out of the gathering.
• Think about using outdoor spaces you have access to. Parking lots, allies, sidewalks are all options. And plan ahead if you require a permit.
• Re-imagine extending your store into an open-air environment.
• Remember the first customer who ever entered your store? How you greeted and treated them? That’s what you’ll need to do with any early adopter who has the courage to shop in your store. Go overboard without being overbearing. Offer to take packages to their car. Throw a little something extra in their bag. Thank them.

Returns
• Will you allow returns? If you do, it’ll be an extra hassle. Especially clothing. How to handle – even if it’s just being tried on and put back on the rack? (Will you steam clothes, a quarantine items for a period of time, wiping things down?)

LOOKING FOR MORE IDEAS FROM FELLOW RETAILERS?
Retailers and retail advocates are encouraged to join MRA’s Facebook group, Michigan Retailers Strategizing Together.
If you have questions about reopening, joining MRA or taking advantage of our services (credit card processing, shipping discounts, insurance offerings and more)

Call 517.372.5655

Email AskUsFirst@retailers.com or

Go to our website retailers.com