

Essential Business Social Distancing Best Practices

Per the [California Department of Public Health](#), basic requirements of social distancing for essential businesses, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, etc., are straightforward:

- maintain at least 6 feet of distance between people
- make hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, or soap and water along with tissues, readily available
- clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly

Businesses should be creative in developing social distancing plans that meet their unique needs, and firm in requiring employees and patrons to abide by them.

Protect employee health

- Make sure that employees do not come to work sick or feel the need to come into work even if they are sick.
- Clean break rooms, bathrooms, and other common areas frequently. See [DPH's COVID-19 Environmental Cleaning Recommendations for Non-Healthcare Businesses and Organizations](#)
- Make cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and soap and water with tissues easily available to all employees.

Prevent large crowds from gathering

- Limit the number of people in a store at any one time. Have an employee at the door let one person in at a time when the store opens to the maximum number of patrons. Then they can let one patron in when another patron leaves. Set a maximum number of patrons low enough to not be too crowded and readily allow 6 feet of distance between patrons and employees.
- Put limits on certain goods that are selling out quickly to allow as many customers a chance to get what they need as possible. Limits will help reduce crowds and lines.
- If your store has high customer volume, set a time in the morning when people over 60 and others who are at risk can come in without pressure from crowds.

Make it easier for people to stay at least 6 feet apart

- Have signs outside your store reminding people in line to be at least 6 feet apart, including in line.
- Put tape marks 6 feet apart on the ground in the store (in line areas) and on sidewalks outside. Put up signs telling customers to use the marks to maintain distance.
- Have a separate order and delivery area or window to keep customers from waiting too long in confined areas together.
- Instruct staff to maintain at least 6 feet distance from customers, except staff may momentarily come closer when necessary to accept payment or deliver goods or services.

Prevent any unnecessary contact

- Prevent people from self-serving any items that are food-related. Lids for cups and food-bar type items should be provided by staff and not to customers to grab.
- Close any bulk-item food bins.
- Encourage people to use contactless pay options with a smart device to avoid having people touch the screen. Otherwise, use a disinfectant wipe on the screen between customers.
- Consider installing a clear plastic screen between a cashier and the customer checking out items if it is not possible to otherwise maintain six feet of distance between them at check out.

Keep it clean

- Put cleaning wipes near shopping carts or shopping baskets and assign an employee to disinfect carts and baskets regularly.
- Have hand sanitizer available at checkout counters and anywhere else inside the store or immediately outside where people have direct interactions.