



COVID-19 has upended the lives of millions of state residents, and retailers in Louisiana are taking the necessary precautions to keep associates and customers safe in the wake of unprecedented upheaval. At the same time, retailers are balancing an unimagined demand for food and supplies and adjusting quickly to the new normal of intermittent out-of-stocks and sporadic customer surges. Despite enormous logistical challenges, our state's retail community has worked around the clock to supply food and supplies to Louisiana families while at the same time taking steps to promote social distancing and limit customer density in stores. Below is a sampling of the precautions Louisiana retailers have voluntarily put in place:

- Implementing social distancing techniques & general health best practices as recommended by CDC
- Special hours for vulnerable citizens
- Expanding delivery and curbside options
- Signage that requests single person shopping trips and reminders of 6 feet distancing
- Increased efforts to disinfect areas like self-checkout, door handles, POS systems, PIN pads and carts
- Adding Plexiglass guards for additional protection in some areas of the store

Many well intentioned local governments have exercised their emergency powers to implement restrictions for retailers including closing times as early as 6:00 pm; limits on the number of customers in the store; and sales of only "essential items." This patchwork of restrictions across the state has made a difficult time even more challenging by creating lines outside of stores, congregations of people in parking lots, and angry customers inside the store. Many retailers have already implemented company wide restrictions that may exceed the following recommendations; however, we believe that a uniform set of reasonable guidelines will inspire confidence in the community and lead to less panic shopping. The Louisiana Retailers Association suggests that local governments that decide to take action that is more restrictive than the statewide "Stay at Home" Order use the following guidelines as a best practice to provide a safer shopping environment for customers and associates:

### **Recommended Retail Guidelines**

- Occupancy should be capped at no less than 50% of store capacity, based on fire marshal regulations, excluding employees and vendors. This approach allows for less density based on store size, rather than a "one size fits all" approach of a set number of customers.
- Retailers should utilize signage and in store announcements to remind customers of social distancing protocols.
- Retailers should utilize signage to request single person shopping trips.
- Store hour limitations should follow the guidelines of the 10:00 pm to 5:00 am curfew as suggested in Proclamation Number 41 JBE 2020. In the event that an earlier closing time than 10:00 pm is implemented, pharmacies should be allowed to operate until at least 9:00 pm in order to provide prescription drug services to essential workers.
- We would like to stress that restrictions on the sale of non-essential items is not recommended. Aisles and shelves offer a mix of goods and roping off an entire area may prevent customers from retrieving their essential items. Roping off areas also potentially conflicts with applicable fire safety codes and could limit access for disabled customers as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. These restrictions also cause tension and divert time away from necessary activities, such as stocking shelves and sanitizing stores.

We appreciate everyone's efforts to safeguard communities and stop the spread of COVID-19, and we hope these recommendations are helpful. Please contact the Louisiana Retailers Association with any questions.