

Guidance for Retail Supermarkets – December 2020

Shopping can be a source of transmission between individuals, and whilst we know and appreciate the existing controls that supermarkets have in place, we want everyone to be able to shop safely to support our economy as well as protecting key workers.

Since the first lockdown earlier this year many people have relaxed their behaviour and social interactions have increased. We recognise that this is not solely the responsibility of retailers and as such we continue our work with our local partners to encourage behavioural change in our residents, your customers.

Many of you will have seen face coverings worn incorrectly, perhaps customers or colleagues not social distancing and the hand sanitiser provided being ignored. But all of these controls need to be adhered to properly and are really important to help reduce further cases and transmission of the virus.

Christmas trading

- Over the next few weeks you will no doubt be expecting significantly increased footfall and sales. You should review your traffic routes from the entrance, through the store and at the checkouts to ensure social distancing controls are still suitable
- As more seasonal products are displayed as end of aisle promotions, more stock requires replenishment during trading hours etc, and this may reduce the floor space and safe capacity of your store. Please bear this in mind when reviewing your Covid risk assessment at a local level, and the safe capacity of your store for customers
- Where demand is high you should consider the staff or extra staff you may require to maintain your Covid controls in your risk assessment. Controls documented in your risk assessment are legally binding
- In addition to social distancing, enhanced cleaning must be carried out particularly of frequently touched hard surfaces. We know that the virus can remain on surfaces for several days where cleaning is not carried out at all or sufficiently. Therefore, please ensure you have an adequate supply of cleaning chemicals and designated staff to undertake frequent cleaning.

Protecting staff

- We also ask that you review the arrangements back of house to protect your staff. If you have employed additional staff, is social distancing being maintained in rest areas, office spaces, and other shared space? Temporary staff should be instructed in your Covid controls to ensure they can perform their role safely
- In the worst case scenario businesses have had to close for several weeks to get on top of a Covid outbreak amongst their staff – clearly a situation we all want to avoid.

The guidance and what you need to do

A good COVID-safe risk assessment can help you to identify controls, and reviewing your risk assessment will make sure you keep up-to-date with changes.

Customers know when a premises has taken the right precautions because it makes them 'feel safe' and they are more likely to return **and** recommend your store to others.

If you need advice, we're here to help. Let's work together to control the virus, and help get Hertfordshire into a lower tier. There is no charge for advice from Environmental Health, our role is to help you to have a safe and successful business, and prevent the spread of the virus.

Where you can get more help

- For the latest government guidance: [Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/food-businesses-on-coronavirus)
- For local practical advice, Hertfordshire Better Business for All Partnership has a wide range of Covid19 Trading Safely checklists, templates and guides at: www.hertfordshirelep.com/what-we-do/priorities/business-support/better-business-for-all/covid-19-advice-and-support/
- Contact your local Environmental Health Team – they will also be conducting spot checks to ensure everyone's safety