

COVID-19 guidance for grocery stores

Grocery stores are considered an “essential business” under the City of Berkeley Health Officer’s stay home order. These stores are permitted to remain open during their normal operating hours.

Grocery stores and other retail establishments that sell grocery items can play an important role in protecting their employees and customers from COVID-19 by following the practices outlined in this document.

Required measures for all essential businesses

All essential businesses are required to post the following at each public entrance of their facility:

1. Signage reminding all employees and customers to:
 - Avoid entering the facility if they have a cough or fever
 - Maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another
 - Sneeze and cough into a tissue, or one’s elbow when not available
 - Not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact

The City has created a sign that can be used for this purpose. It can be downloaded at bit.ly/social-distancing-sign.

2. A social distancing protocol that details on-site measures enacted by the business to customers and employees safe.

The City has provided a social distancing protocol as a fillable form at bit.ly/covid19-protocol. Business must implement the measures listed in the protocol to the maximum extent possible.

3. Signage that states all employees, customers, and other visitors to the facility must wear a face covering while inside.



The City has created a sign that can be used for this purpose. It can be downloaded at bit.ly/face-covering-sign.

Recommended practices for grocery stores

Measures to promote social distancing among customers

Grocery stores should maintain an in-store environment that allows for a continued 6-foot social distance for employees and customers wherever possible.

- Use floor markings such as stickers, tape or diagrams, to depict where customers should stand to maintain a 6 foot distance between one another. These should be placed in check-out lines or in any other locations where customers may congregate (deli line, bakery, meat or fish counter).
- Deploy staff to provide crowd control at the entrance of the store in order to keep interior crowds low and encourage spacing in line outside of the store entrance.
- Limit the number of customers in the store at any given time.
- Reserve time for seniors and people with compromised immune systems to shop prior to opening to the general public, such as during the first hour when the store opens.

Measures to promote sanitation

- Provide alcohol based (60%) hand sanitizers for use for both employees and customers by placing them at convenient and accessible locations.
- Provide disinfecting wipes at points of entrance for customers to disinfect carts, at cash registers, and other appropriate locations.
- Provide tissue boxes and trash cans with foot operated pedals at the entrance and near all doors with pull handles.



- Appoint a designated sanitation worker at all times to continuously clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. See the [environmental cleaning guidelines from CDC](#).
- Adjust store hours if necessary to allow time each day for thorough cleaning and disinfecting.
- Discontinue self-serve foods, including hot bars, cold bars, buffets, and bulk bins.
- Discontinue product sampling.

Measures to limit contact

- Place signs at the register/point of sale encouraging the use of contactless cash applications.
- Place a small table at the cash register or point of sale to create a 6-foot buffer between the employee and the customer.
- Erect a plastic threshold between employees at the register and the customer, similar to a bank teller window.
- Only bag items using single use disposable bags. Do not use customer-provided reusable bags or allow customers to bag their own items using reusable bags in store. If customers do not wish to use disposable bags, allow them to place the loose items back in their cart after checking out and bag their groceries themselves outside the store.

Safety measures for employees

- Face coverings: employees must wear a cloth mask that covers their nose and mouth at all times while in the workplace. Store operators should provide masks for employees, if possible.
- Pre-screen employees: Check employee temperatures and assess symptoms prior to them starting work daily. If possible, conduct temperature checks and symptom assessment before employees enter the facility.





- Clean and disinfect all common areas routinely.
- Ensure that employees practice washing their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 20 seconds upon first arriving to work, after using the restroom, before and after eating, and frequently throughout the day.

For any questions regarding this guidance, or assistance implementing social distancing at your business, email oadmailbox@cityofberkeley.info or call (510) 981-7530.

