

COVID-19 Guidelines for Malls and Shopping Centres

This document contains guidance for operators of mall/shopping centre to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For related information please refer to [Guidance for Retail Settings](#).

As every mall and shopping centre is different, it is ultimately the responsibility of the operator to review their own site-specific circumstances and assess their ability to implement appropriate infection prevention and control measures. For information about how to assess COVID-19 risks in your setting and to plan risk modifications, please refer to the Toronto Public Health [Risk Assessment and Risk Mitigation Guide for Businesses during COVID-19](#).

COVID-19 transmission

Respiratory transmission: [COVID-19](#) is an illness that is spread mainly from person-to-person through close contact from respiratory droplets of someone with COVID-19. The respiratory droplets can travel up to two metres/six feet when we cough, sneeze or talk.

Contaminated surfaces: It is possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. This new coronavirus can survive on plastic and stainless steel surfaces for [up to 72 hours](#).

Protective measures to keep everyone safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a two metre/six feet distance from others, when possible.
- Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a face mask or covering.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Protect and monitor employee health

- Every business owner should develop and communicate staff policies concerning staff health and safety, including attendance policies and staff screening for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Every business owner should be aware of what to do if there is a case of COVID-19 in the workplace.
- Please refer to [Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#) for tools and resources to use.

Stay home when you are sick

- Post [signs](#) at entrances explaining COVID-19 symptoms and the conditions for entry.
 - Those with symptoms should not enter the mall to avoid spreading the virus.

Facilitate physical distancing

Shared Mall Space

- Adjust operating hours to control the number of people permitted in the mall at one time.
 - Consider ways to support vulnerable populations such as dedicated mall hours.
- Assign employees or security to assist with ensuring physical distancing in high-traffic areas.
- Monitor entrances to control the number of people entering the mall at any given time.
 - Restrict and/or direct the flow of people into, throughout and exiting the mall (e.g. designate some doors for entry or exit to avoid two-way traffic, designate some hallways for one-way traffic with signs and floor decals).
 - Encourage visitors to exit the mall as quickly as possible following completion of their shopping/transactions.
- Place additional hands-free garbage bins with removable linings at all entrances and exits.
- Remove or spread apart seating in shared spaces including food courts, at least two metres/six feet.
- Limit the number of people in washrooms at a time.
 - Close toilets or urinals that are less than two metres/six feet apart without barriers between them.

Retail Settings and Stores

For public health guidance on safely reopening individual retail settings and stores, refer to the Toronto Public Health document [Guidance for Retail Settings](#).

Install transparent barriers

- Consider installing plexiglass or other physical barriers where physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as at information kiosks.
- To be effective the barrier must be large enough to create a shield between the breathing zones of the people on either side.
- [Download](#) information about installing effective barriers.

Proper use of cloth masks and face coverings

- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).
- Post signs encouraging people to dispose of used masks safely in garbage bins.

Support and encourage proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer rub (ABHR) with 70-90% alcohol concentration in dispensers outside the entrance to the mall and in multiple locations throughout the mall,

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particularly near high-touch services such as bank machines, touch-screen signs, elevators, escalators, stairs, and food courts.

- Encourage everyone to use ABHR when they enter the mall.
- Continue to top up the supply of ABHR in dispensers throughout the day.
- Post [Hand Washing](#), [Cover your Cough](#) and [Hand Sanitizing](#) signs in high visibility locations.
- Wash hands with liquid soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds frequently.
- Cover cough or sneeze with the elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash hands.

Implement enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection practices

- Business hours may need to be adjusted to accommodate enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices.
- Ensure [cleaning and disinfecting](#) of high-touch surfaces before opening, at least twice a day, and more frequently as needed. High-touch surfaces include items such as door handles, counters, cabinet doors, elevator buttons, escalator handrails, touch screen surfaces, and keypads.
- Refer to [Health Canada's list of hard surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) for information on disinfectants:
 - Disinfectants must have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
 - Check the expiry dates of products and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Chlorine bleach solutions may be prepared and used for disinfection if appropriate for the surface.
- Ensure a minimum of two minutes disinfectant contact time and allow to air dry.
- Employees should use gloves if it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with bodily fluids, broken skin, mucous membranes, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces.
- Proper hand hygiene should be practiced before and after removing masks and gloves, if used.
- Discourage use of touch screens for wayfinding.
- Shopping carts and baskets must be sanitized between each customer. Those which cannot be easily sanitized should not be provided (e.g. cloth bags).
- Do not hand out any coupons, samples, testers, or flyers.
- Remove soft/porous items that are difficult to sanitize such as upholstery, cushions and rugs.
- Mall operators and food court vendors must refer to [COVID-19 Guidance for Restaurants](#).

Increase communication with customers

- Communicate to visitors, tenants and employees about the changes you have made to protect them against COVID-19 through multiple platforms (e.g. signs, website, social media, voice mail)
- Use public announcement systems frequently to deliver key messages to mall visitors (e.g. physical distancing, sanitizing hands at entrances, no gathering/crowding in one area).

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- Encourage visitors, tenants and employees to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Post signs at the entrance instructing visitors, tenants and employees not to enter if they are sick.
- Post educational materials to encourage healthy behaviours that reduce the spread of COVID-19:
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [Face Masks & Coverings](#)
 - [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Information about COVID-19](#)
 - [Hand Sanitizing](#)
 - [Cover your Cough](#)
 - [Screening Poster for Entrances](#)

Other Resources

[Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#)

[Guidance for Retail Settings](#)

[Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Retail Sector during COVID-19](#)

[Province of Ontario Retail: Guidance for Health and Safety Tip sheet](#)

[Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety COVID-19 Tip Sheets](#)

More Information

Information changes frequently. Please visit www.toronto.ca/COVID19 to stay up to date.