



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Interim Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Malls and Shopping Centers

March 23, 2020

Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All businesses and facilities that congregate people in an enclosed space, including but not limited to retail stores, movie theaters, and shopping malls, should create a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission.

This guidance will help malls and shopping centers plan and prepare for COVID-19 in their communities.

Plan Ahead

- Review any emergency plans you already have and update them if necessary.
- Make a plan for what you will do if large numbers of employees are unable to attend work, which may occur if schools are closed or their family members are sick. Identify key positions and cross-train staff to ensure all essential functions will be covered.
- [Stay informed](#) about COVID-19 in your community.

Communicate

- Instruct patrons to stay home if they are sick. If applicable, have a flexible cancellation / rescheduling policy so sick people and people taking care of COVID-19 patients are able to stay home.
- If you have employees who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19, including people over 65 and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as diabetes, chronic lung disease and chronic heart disease, or a compromised immune system (e.g., cancer, cancer treatment, or other immunosuppressant treatments), find positions that minimize contact with the public.
- Create flexible sick leave policies so employees stay home from work when they are sick.
 - Employees may discontinue isolation and return to normal activities when it has been at least 7 days since their first day of illness AND they have been without fever for three days (72 hours) and their other symptoms are improving, in consultation with their healthcare providers and state and local health departments.
 - Employers should not ask for a negative COVID-19 test or a note from a medical provider for employees to return to work.
- Post signs encouraging patrons to leave immediately if they begin to show symptoms of illness, COVID-19 or otherwise.

Keep Everyone Healthy

- Have respiratory hygiene supplies available for employees and patrons, including hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and lined trash cans.

- Promote behaviors that prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19, among patrons and employees. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NC DHHS](#).
- Disinfect frequently-touched surfaces with a [cleaning agent that is effective against coronaviruses](#) throughout the day and at close of business.

Practice Social Distancing

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state people should practice social distancing by remaining six feet apart to minimize the risk of coronavirus infection. Recognizing that this is may be challenging, below are examples of application.
- Place chairs six feet apart from each other.
- If you typically have people waiting in line, consider marking six-foot intervals on the floor for patrons to stand on.
- Only let as many people in as your facility can accommodate while everyone remains six feet apart. If people must wait to be let in, have them wait in their cars and contact them by phone when they can enter.
- Have employees remain six feet apart from patrons whenever possible. (CDC defines close contact as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for 10 or more minutes.)

Cancelling or Postponing Events

- [CDC recommend](#) that all events with 50 or more people should be postponed or cancelled to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.
- If you host events that gather less than 50 people, please read the guidance about [managing events](#).

Patrons Later Diagnosed with COVID-19

- If a patron is diagnosed with COVID-19 after visiting your facility, your local health department may ask you for contact information for anyone who may have had close contact with the patient.
 - If this occurs, attendees who had close contact with the COVID-19 patient will be asked to monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days.
- If you are concerned about a patron who was diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after visiting your business, [contact your local health department](#).
- To prevent the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from contact with contaminated surfaces, ensure that all high contact areas of the facility are cleaned with an [agent that is active against coronaviruses](#).

For more information about COVID-19 preparedness for businesses, please see the CDC's [Resources for Businesses and Employers](#).

For general information about COVID-19, refer to the [North Carolina COVID-19 website](#).