

Sector Information

Sector Name: Retail & Grocery

NAICS Code(s): 42, 44-48, 423, 424, 425, 451, 452, 453*

Sample Companies: Price Chopper, Hannaford, Shaw's, Target, Georgia Market, Bennington Potters North, Homeport, Bailey Road, Wayside Country Store, Associated Grocers of New England, Richmond Market, Farm Way

Vermont Sector Trade Association Name(s): Vermont Retail & Grocers Association

Vermont Employees in Sector: 90,426*

\$ Vermont Payroll in Sector: \$3,404,536,078*

**Does not include benefits; includes wholesale trade, merchant wholesalers of durable and non-durable goods*

***Phases two and three have not been approved by ACCD.*

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Phased implementation Timeline & Types of Work	<p>“Critical retailers” have established and implemented protocols to ensure safety for employees and customers through CDC guidance and industry best practices. Critical retailers will continue to employ these practices with CDC guidance and industry best practices.</p> <p>Stores offering curbside service and delivery options will communicate plan for accessibility for those considered high risk. Option may include, but not limited to designated hours, call-in orders, curbside service, or home delivery.</p> <p>All retailers to demarcate six feet of spacing in check-out lines and other high traffic areas to demonstrate appropriate spacing for social distancing.</p>	<p>Occupancy to increase to TBD% of approved fire safety code.</p> <p>Retailers are encouraged to continue curbside service and delivery where possible</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices to continue</p>	<p>Return to full occupancy including customers, visitors, and staffing in the occupancy standard</p> <p>Retailers are encouraged to continue curbside service and delivery where possible</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices to continue</p>
	<p>Non-essential retail operations are limited to 25% (twenty-five percent) of approved fire safety occupancy; or 1 customer per 200 square feet; or 10 total customers and staff combined, whichever is greater.</p> <p>Operators must POST their temporary occupancy limit, and which method was used to determine it, prominently on all entrances. Posting templates are</p>	<p>Occupancy to increase to TBD% of approved fire safety code.</p> <p>Retailers are encouraged to continue curbside service and delivery where possible</p> <p>Enhanced cleaning and sanitation practices to continue</p>	

	<p>available at accd.vermont.gov</p> <p>Cashless/touch-less transactions are strongly preferred.</p> <p>Facial coverings and social distancing are strongly recommended for retail customers.</p> <p>Curbside pickup is strongly encouraged to be the preferred method of operation.</p> <p>When possible, retailers should take steps to schedule or stage customer visits, such as waiting in cars or outside, to ensure lower contact operations.</p>	
Employee Training & Education Plan	<p>A designated health and safety officer will be on-site for each shift, who monitors and has the authority to stop or modify activities to ensure compliance with these mandatory health and safety requirements. <i>(See duties below)</i></p> <p>Stores will adopt and follow the current CDC and State Guidelines for employee training and education requirements</p> <p>All employees must complete current VOSHA Training, employers must keep documentation until Dec. 31, 2020.</p>	
Physical Distancing Plan	<p>Establish and communicate a plan for accessibility for those considered high risk. Options may include, but not limited to designated hours, call-in orders, curbside service, or home delivery.</p> <p>Employees, if possible, will be required to check temperatures and review pre-screening questions <i>(See questions, guidance below)</i> at home prior to starting each shift</p> <p>Shifts will be implemented to minimize contact between employees</p> <p>Employers and employees will follow 6-foot social distancing rule throughout all common areas, including in check-out lines to demonstrate appropriate spacing for social distancing.</p>	

<p>Employees must have easy and frequent access to soap and water or hand sanitizer during duration of work, and handwashing or hand sanitization should be required before entering, and leaving, work.</p> <p>Customers, must have access to soap and water or hand sanitizer during visit, and handwashing or hand sanitization should be required before entering, and leaving the business.</p> <p>All employees must wear face coverings over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others.</p> <p>Businesses may post signage at all entrances and require customers to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others.</p> <p>All common spaces and equipment, including bathrooms, frequently touched surfaces and doors, tools and equipment, must be cleaned and disinfected at the beginning, middle and end of each shift.</p>		
<p>Customers will be directed to avoid touching products</p> <p>Customers will use hand sanitizer or wipes before trying on/handling items</p> <p>Food and beverage samples tastings are prohibited</p> <p>Customers are prohibited from trying on items that are worn on the face (cloth masks, scarves, headbands, eyewear).</p> <p>If fitting rooms are re-opened, customers should wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after trying on clothes. Retailers should provide hand sanitizer or hand washing stations near fitting rooms.</p> <p>Note: There are no scientific data to indicate that clothing items are</p>	<p>Food and beverage samples tastings must be staffed by employee with PPE</p> <p>Customers are encouraged to wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after trying on clothes.</p>	<p>Fitting rooms will be disinfected regularly</p> <p>Food and beverage samples tasting areas, utensils will be disinfected/changed regularly</p> <p>Food and beverage samples tastings must be staffed by employees with PPE. Sample areas will offer only single use utensils to customers (toothpicks, paper cups etc.) to avoid reuse and contamination</p>

	<p>a major means of spread of the coronavirus. Any risk from this exposure is likely to be very low.</p> <p>Items that have been in a fitting room may be set aside for 24 hours.</p> <p>When processing returns, employees should wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after handling items. Retailer may set items aside for 24 hours</p>		
<p>Postings and Notifications</p>	<p>Customers: Conspicuous signage will be posted at all entrances and throughout the store alerting staff and customers to the required occupancy limits, six feet of physical distance, notification of policy on face covering, and request to limit touching products they do not intend to buy.</p> <p>Signs must be posted at all entrances indicating that no one may enter if they are experiencing/displaying respiratory symptoms</p> <p>Employees: CDC/VDH recommended postings will be posted in all relevant areas, including all employee entrances, kitchen/breakrooms, restrooms, point of sale/register, etc.</p> <p>Delivery/Vendors: CDC/VDH recommended postings and store requirements posted at delivery entrances</p> <p>Employee/Public Postings</p>		
<p>Health Monitoring Policy for Employees</p>	<p>Employees encouraged to self-identify symptoms</p> <p>To the extent feasible, prior to the commencement of each work shift, pre-screening or survey shall be required to verify each employee has no symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, and/or</p>	<p>Employees encouraged to self-identify symptoms</p> <p>Designated health and safety officer will continue to maintain training, education, record-keeping.</p>	<p>Employees encouraged to self-identify symptoms</p> <p>Designated health and safety officer will continue to maintain training, education, record-keeping.</p> <p>Retailers will monitor guidance from ACCD/VDH/CDC to</p>

	<p>shortness of breath), including temperature checks. <i>(See questions, guidance below)</i></p> <p>Designated health and safety officer will continue to maintain training, education, record-keeping.</p>		determine proper practices
Health Monitoring Policy for Customers/Vendors/Delivery Personnel	<p>Customers feeling ill will be encouraged to stay home</p> <p>Sales vendors are required, to the extent possible, to conduct business through contactless communication</p> <p>Retailers will communicate via letter to vendors, distributors, etc. individual store safety and health protocols</p> <p>Vendors/Delivery personnel are required to wear cloth face coverings any time they are interacting with the public including store employees</p> <p>Customers, and the public in general, are encouraged to wear cloth face coverings any time they are interacting with the public including store employees</p>	<p>Customers feeling ill will be encouraged to stay home</p> <p>Sales vendors are required, to the extent possible, to conduct business through contactless communication</p> <p>Vendors/Delivery personnel required to wear cloth face coverings any time they are interacting with the public including store employees</p>	<p>Customers feeling ill will be encouraged to stay home</p> <p>Retailers will monitor guidance from ACCD/VDH/CDC to determine proper practices</p>
Supply chain impacts of reopening	<p>Retailers will: assess supply needs and explore options for sourcing additional supplies required for business operations; assess how to best leverage existing relationships with vendors.</p> <p>Create a plan for how you will source and distribute cleaning products and PPE, accounting for existing and/or future shortages. Establish a</p>		

	<p>protocol to monitor this on a frequent basis as rules and health guidance changes with the prevalence of the virus.</p> <p>If retailers have international operations, current challenges with respect to shipping certain products (such as PPE) may need to be modified.</p>
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APPENDIX

Safety, Health, Sanitation, Compliance and Enforcement Plans

Guidance set forth by National Retail Federation and Retail Industry Leaders

Hygiene

- Require infection control practices, such as regular hand washing, coughing and sneezing etiquette, and proper tissue usage and disposal.
- Encourage employees to engage in repeated handwashing/sanitization throughout the workday.
- Provide sanitization materials, such as hand soap, hand sanitizer, and sanitizing wipes to employees.
- Require the use of gloves and regularly sanitize community technology and equipment such as POS, cash registers, copy machines, etc.

Sanitation

- Require frequent sanitization of high-touch areas like restrooms, fitting rooms, doors, PIN pads, and common areas.
- Ensure operating hours allow downtime between shifts for thorough cleaning.
- Provide sanitization materials, such as sanitizing wipes, to employees to clean handhelds/wearables, scanners, radios, or other work tools and equipment before/after use.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch areas routinely, particularly in spaces that are accessible to staff, customers, and suppliers.
- Ensure cleaning procedures following a known or potential exposure in a facility comply with CDC recommendations.
- Have deep cleaning response plan in place, in the event of an associate(s) testing positive.
- Follow CDC guidance related to returned merchandise before returning items to the sales floor.
- Allow retailers to suspend or extend the time period for customers to return items.

Protective Face Coverings

- Require workers, contractors, and drivers to wear face coverings while on the premises.
- Strongly encourage customers to wear face coverings while on the premises.
- Post signage for customers to understand the importance of wearing face coverings.
- PSAs from law enforcement urging consumers to act responsibly and utilize face coverings—it should not be the responsibility of retailers to enforce.

Health Screening

- Encourage employees to self-evaluate (before they arrive for shifts) for signs of illness (such as a fever over 100.4, cough, or shortness of breath).
- Require associates who exhibit signs of illness not to report to work and encourage them to seek medical attention prior to returning.

Designation of Employee(s) responsible for Health Monitoring

As directed by the State of Vermont all business operations must have a designated health and safety officer on-site at all times who monitors and has the authority to stop or modify activities to ensure compliance with these mandatory health and safety requirements.

Designee Responsibilities

Maintain communications regarding COVID-19 between employees and management
Maintain documentation of employee communications, mandatory VOSHA training, training certificates,

[Mandatory VOHSA Training for all employees](#)

Means of Monitoring Employee Health

As directed by the State of Vermont, employees shall not report to, or be allowed to remain at, work if sick or symptomatic (with fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath).

To the extent feasible, prior to the commencement of each work shift, pre-screening or survey shall be required to verify each employee has no symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath), including temperature checks.

1. Have you been confirmed positive for COVID-19?
2. Are you currently experiencing, or recently experienced, any acute respiratory illness symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath?
3. Have you been in close contact with any persons who has been confirmed positive for COVID-19?
4. Have you been in close contact with any persons who have traveled and are also exhibiting acute respiratory illness symptoms?

If an employee answers YES to any questions 1-4, refer to [Vermont Department of Health, Center for Disease Control](#).

Additional resources:

CDC: [Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)

VDH: [COVID-19 Health & Safety Tips for Essential Businesses](#)

OSHA: [Guidance on Prepping Workplaces](#), [latest information on COVID-19](#)

VRGA compiled Document from VDH, CDC: [Keeping your Employees Safe](#)

FDA: [What to Do if You Have COVID-19 Confirmed Positive or Exposed Workers in Your Food Production, Storage, or Distribution Operations Regulated by FDA](#)

FDA: [Use of Respirators, Facemasks, and Cloth Face Coverings in the Food and Agriculture Sector During Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)

Food Marketing Institute: [Guidance for the Food Industry: Coronavirus Breakout](#)

VRGA: [List of Commercial Cleaners](#) (VRGA does not endorse any cleaning service, but is providing this list for ease of access in the event a cleaning is necessary)

Traceability

Businesses will follow guidelines set forth by Vermont Department of Health regarding traceability
Designated health and safety officer will communicate with management when issues arise that require the need to alert Vermont Department of Health

Designation of Employee(s) responsible for Vendor Health Monitoring

To the extent possible, all vendors and distributors will submit to the retailers a letter confirming their compliance with monitoring employee health in accordance with CDC/VDH regulations.

Signage will be posted at delivery entrances that clarify:

- Retailer's health and safety policies
- Requirement that all delivery personnel wear cloth face coverings

Vendors and suppliers that need to offer in-person services to enable the industry to operate include:

- General industry suppliers
- Cleaning, sanitation and PPE, manufacturers, suppliers, delivery
- Janitorial services
- Facility maintenance: electric, plumbing, refrigeration, HVAC, etc.
- Exterior maintenance: landscaping
- Inspection functions: health, safety, VDH, etc.
- Waste collection: composting, garbage and recycling
- Office services: technology repair, USPS / FEDEX / UPS
- PPE <https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/facecovering>

Signage

Standard signage should be created by the State of Vermont with approved language for all businesses to easily access. This conspicuous signage will be posted at entrances and throughout the store alerting staff and customers to the required occupancy limits, six feet of physical distance, and policy on face covering, request to limit touching product.

[Stop the Spread of Germs](#)

[Sample Suggestions and Signage from VDH](#)

[Additional signage from CDC](#)

Supply Chain Vendors

VRGA, as well as food retailers and food distributors will continue to monitor, plan, and navigate food supply. VRGA will continue to provide weekly updates to the SEOC, Agency of Agriculture, and additional agencies at the request of the Administration.

Public Education and Awareness

VRGA and retailers will partner with VDH, ACCD, and the Administration to provide education and awareness of best practices while shopping or in public. This effort must be robust, consistent, and long-term. If “we’re all in this together” we really need buy-in from everyone.

Additional Best Practice Suggestions

Customer and Employee Communication plan:

To reopen, it's important to remember that some of your customers and employees will be nervous to return. How you communicate and message to both groups is incredibly important. Come up with a good messaging plan and keep to it consistently. We recommend at least once a week. Your customers want to hear what steps you are taking to keep them safe. Your employees want to hear what steps you are taking to keep them safe. This needs to be a steady flow of information. Ask for feedback from both groups to keep an open line of communication. As feedback starts to come back, remain calm and don't make snap decisions that further affect operations. Take each one on a case by case basis, reach out to trusted advisers for help, then make a plan, roll it out, and communicate it. This considered, slow process will keep things calm instead of panicked and reactionary. Remember, communication is KEY to restarting successfully and in rebuilding trust with your employees and with your customers.

The below practices have been shared by businesses deemed critical by the State of Vermont. Given the broad business models within the retail landscape, not all suggestions will fit each retail store. These best practices have been provided to help retailers keep their employees and customers safe.

- If possible, designate employees to take orders and become personal shoppers while customers wait outside
- Try to limit the number of customers physically in the store at any given time
- Provide a plastic shield between the customer and your employees to prevent transmission from sneezing or coughing
- Designate specific aisles or locations within a store that employees maintain to ensure their safety as well as reduce the number of products that customers come in contact with
- Change aisles to be one-way only and reiterate 6ft social distancing in each aisle
- If customers are using cash, designate a lane or register for cash only and require that employees use gloves
- If possible, keep every other register closed to increase distance between customers
- Provide clean pens with each transaction
 - Have the customer pick up and use the sanitized pen, do not hand it to them
 - Have the customer place the now used pen in a “dirty” cup for later cleaning
- Urge customers to practice the CDC’s recommended practice of staying at least 6 feet away from each other. Some stores have placed markers six feet from each other, on the ground, at registers so customers know how far apart to stand
- Encourage customers to leave reusable bags at home for now or bag their own purchases
- Take advantage of low-contact options like curbside and delivery service
- Send one person to shop for families