

# Covid-19 Guidance for Supermarkets and other Food Retailers

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**Please note that, as COVID-19 is a rapidly evolving situation, guidance may change with little notice. Therefore we advise that, in addition to familiarising yourself with the content of this document, you also refer to the relevant national guidance linked throughout.**

## **Background**

Across Lincolnshire, and the country as a whole, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of coronavirus. The government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, staying at home and social distancing. Food shopping has been highlighted as an essential activity therefore to help keep your employees and customers safe below is some key guidance to help prevent the spread of coronavirus.

## **Context for supermarkets**

This guidance is designed for supermarkets and all other food retailers of any size.

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness; meaning it is spread from person to person via respiratory droplets. These droplets can be transferred either directly from person to person in close proximity to one another or from person to surfaces within the supermarket setting and therefore between staff and customers touching the same surfaces.

There are many areas of the supermarket, such as trolleys and card readers, which have frequent usage from one customer to the next. This gives ample opportunities for COVID-19 to pass between people. Therefore, this document contains key guidance for supermarkets to follow regarding good practice.

## **Public awareness and actions they can take**

Supermarkets and food retailers have a key role to play in displaying advice and guidance during this time. Free national posters and leaflets can be downloaded from the Public Health England [Campaign Resource Centre](#) and further local resources, included some translated materials, can be found [here](#).

The key messages are:

- Sanitise hands on entry to and exit from the supermarket to reduce the likelihood of transferring respiratory droplets from hands to surfaces.
- Cough into a tissue (or sleeve) and wash hands after to prevent transfer to supermarket surfaces
- Refrain from touching the face whilst shopping
- Maintain a 2 metre distance from other shoppers
- Wash your hands on returning home to reduce the likelihood of transferring anything from your hands to surfaces around the home

## **Cleaning trolleys and touch points**

At the start of each shopping day all touch points require cleaning, including:

- Trolleys and Baskets – specifically handles
- Hand held checkout devices
- Touch displays at check out
- Contact points such as fridge/freezer handles
- On site ATMs

These areas should also be cleaned frequently throughout the day, preferably after each use but as a minimum hourly. National guidance regarding [decontamination in non-healthcare settings](#) should be followed to prevent the spread of contamination from surface to surface.

In summary cleaning requires:

- Disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads to clean trolley and handbasket handles/other relevant touchpoints, following one of the options below:
  - A combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine OR
  - A household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants OR
  - If an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses
- Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.
- Any cloths used must be disposed of appropriately.

Any items that are heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned by washing should be disposed of. Individuals undertaking this should wear disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning. These should be double-bagged, stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.

Supermarkets should assign the above task to specific individual or individuals.

## Hand sanitising

Supermarkets should provide hand sanitiser for customer use to reduce the likelihood of customers contaminating frequently used touch points in the supermarket.

Place provisions on a podium which can be observed by staff, from a minimum of 2m distance, to prevent the sanitizer being removed. This will need to be positioned so as not to cause customers to queue and encroach the 2 metre rule. Super markets can provide additional pop-up handwashing stations or facilities if possible, providing soap, water and hand sanitiser.

## Social distancing in supermarkets

Social distancing measures help to reduce social interaction between people thus reducing the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Government social distancing guidance can be found [here](#).

Social distancing in supermarkets may be best evaluated by the store manager, however a few general indicators may be relevant to the majority of retail outlets:

- Use additional signage to ask customers not to enter the shop if they have symptoms
- Regulate entry so that the premises do not become overcrowded
- Use floor markings inside the commercial spaces to facilitate compliance with the social distancing advice of 2 metres, particularly in the most crowded areas, such as serving counters and tills
- Make regular announcements to remind customers to follow social distancing advice and clean their hands regularly
- Place plexiglass barriers at tills and counters if feasible, as an additional element of protection for workers and customers
- Encourage the use of contactless payments where possible

[Source: [Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus](#)]

## **Good hand hygiene for staff and staff wellness**

Any employee who is unwell should not be at work. If they have symptoms, they should follow government advice to stay at home and seek a test.

Although it is very unlikely that coronavirus is transmitted through food, as a matter of good hygiene practice anyone handling food should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done as a matter of routine, before and after handling food, and especially after being in a public place, blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Staff break-out areas and back of shop operations should be treated in the same manner as the rest of the supermarket, all frequent touch points cleaned regularly.

Food business operators should continue to follow the Food Standard Agency's guidance on good hygiene practices in food preparation and their Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) processes 7 Version 3// Updated 02/04/2020.

## **Key guidance**

Information for the public:

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Guidance regarding staying at home and guidance for those at extremely high risk:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19)