

## Retail Workers and Employers in Critical and High Customer-Volume Environments

This section provides guidance for workers and employers involved in retail operations that remain open during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those operations with high customer volumes and in critical sectors. This includes retail pharmacies and drug stores, grocery stores, and other entities that sell essential supplies. This guidance supplements the general interim guidance for workers and employers of workers at increased risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, above.



Employers should assess the hazards to which their workers may be exposed; evaluate the risk of exposure; and select, implement, and ensure workers use controls to prevent exposure. The table below provides examples of retail work tasks associated with the exposure risk levels in OSHA's occupational exposure risk pyramid, which may serve as a guide to employers in this sector.

### Examples of retail work tasks associated with exposure risk levels

Lower (caution)	Medium	High	Very High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performing administrative duties in non-public areas of work sites, away from other workers.</li> <li>▪ Working in stock rooms or other non-public areas of stores, away from customers and other workers.</li> <li>▪ Working when the facility is closed to the public, such as overnight, performing tasks, such as stocking shelves, away from other workers.</li> </ul> <p>Note: For activities in the lower (caution) risk category, OSHA's <i>Interim Guidance for Workers and Employers of Workers at Lower Risk of Exposure</i> may be most appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working in high-volume retail environments, including at points of sale and other positions within such facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Most retail work tasks are associated with lower (caution) or medium exposure risks; see the other columns of this chart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Most retail work tasks are associated with lower (caution) or medium exposure risks; see the other columns of this chart.</p>

Retail workers in critical and high customer-volume environments, particularly those in the medium-risk category who have frequent contact with the public, must be protected from exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

Various combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE may be appropriate for these types of retail workers, depending on the results of their employers' hazard and risk assessments.

### *Engineering Controls*

As appropriate, such as at customer service windows and, if feasible, cash register lanes, use physical barriers to separate retail workers from members of the general public.

Use rope-and-stanchion systems to keep customers from queuing or congregating near work areas. For example, provide a waiting area for customers that is separated by at least 6 feet from a cash register workstation. Signage that instructs individuals waiting in line to remain 6 feet back from work areas may bolster the effectiveness of this engineering control.

### *Administrative Controls*

Whenever possible, direct customers to self-checkout kiosks to minimize worker interaction with customers.

Establish protocols and provide supplies to **disinfect** frequently-touched surfaces in workspaces and public-facing areas, such as points of sale. For example, wipe down credit card terminals and pens/styluses between each customer. Providing wipes for customers and asking them to do this themselves after each use may also reduce the chance of worker exposure resulting from this frequently repeated activity. Wipe down worker-facing touch screens, keyboards, or other equipment at least as often as workers change workstations. Frequently clean push bars and handles on any doors that do not open automatically.

Take steps to discourage customers from queuing at customer service lanes, cash register lanes, or other areas within the retail environment. Such efforts may include those mentioned in the Engineering Controls section, above, as well as signage.

Consider restricting the number of customers allowed inside the facility at any point in time. Some stores have implemented this by specifying hours dedicated to vulnerable populations (elderly people, people with underlying health conditions, etc.).

Employers may be able to reduce crowding in retail environments by extending store hours, particularly in critical retail environments like grocery stores and pharmacies, but should consider overall additional exposures to employees who must work extra shifts and take steps to mitigate that increased exposure risk.

When developing staff schedules, consider options for additional short breaks to increase the frequency with which staff can wash hands with soap and water. Alternatively, consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol so that workers can frequently sanitize their hands.

Employers should consider options for increasing in-store pickup or delivery to minimize the number of customers shopping in store facilities.

### *Safe Work Practices*

Workers should avoid touching their faces, including their eyes, noses, and mouths, particularly until after they have thoroughly washed their hands upon completing work and/or removing PPE.

Throughout the work shift, frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or, if soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

### *Personal Protective Equipment*

Most retail workers in critical and high customer-volume environments are unlikely to need PPE beyond what they use to protect themselves during routine job tasks. However, employers should consider whether their hazard and risk assessments warrant the use of items such as gloves or eye and face protection. For