

Protocols for Grocery Stores and Retail Food Markets: Appendix B-1

Effective Date: 12:01am on Monday, March 15, 2021

Recent Updates: (Changes are highlighted in yellow)

3/12/21:

- Stand-alone grocery stores must limit their occupancy to ensure that all employees and customers are able to maintain at least 6-foot of physical distance from each other at all times. Further, stand-alone grocery stores are strongly encouraged to limit their occupancy to 50% of maximum indoor occupancy based on applicable building and fire code until at least April 15, 2021, to enable sufficient time for as many grocery store workers as possible to receive vaccine.
- All other retail food markets must limit their occupancy to 50% of applicable building or fire code occupancy.
- HVAC guidance has been updated.
- Entry screening language for employees and customers has been updated.

COVID-19 case rates, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to fall, but still remain high. COVID-19 continues to pose a high risk to communities and requires all people and businesses to take precautions and modify operations and activities to reduce the risk of spread.

Due to Los Angeles County entering the “Red Tier” of the State’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework, this protocol has been updated to lift some local activity-specific restrictions. Grocery Stores and Retail Food Markets should proceed with caution and adhere to the requirements in this protocol to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 within their business operations.

The requirements below are specific to retail food markets, including but not limited to grocery stores convenience stores, liquor stores and other retail locations that sell food or beverage products and have a health permit issued by the Department of Public Health as a Food Market Retail. In addition to the conditions imposed on these specific retail businesses by the Governor, these types of businesses must also be in compliance with the conditions required by this **County** protocol.

Stand-alone grocery stores are strongly encouraged to limit their occupancy to 50% occupancy based on fire or building department occupancy limits. At all times, stand-alone grocery stores must ensure that employees and customers are able to maintain at least 6-foot physical distance from individuals who are not members of their household. For the purposes of this protocol, a stand-alone grocery store is defined as a store where the principal business activity is the sale of food. All other business that have a health permit as a retail food market may be open at 50% occupancy based on fire or building department occupancy limits.

For purposes of a grocery store this protocol shall apply to all departments within the retail food market, such as general merchandise, produce, florist, meat, deli, and bakery. Retail Food Markets may also need to comply with the following guidance:

- ☐ DPH Protocols for Restaurants, Breweries, and Wineries; however, no food may be taken “to-go” from the restaurant and consumed within the retail food market except in designated dining areas, if applicable.

In addition, any independently operated businesses collocated within the premises of the Retail Food Market are required to comply with the appropriate protocol for their business.

Please note: This document may be updated as additional information and resources become available so be sure to check the LA County website <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> regularly for any updates to this document.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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This checklist covers:

- (1) Workplace policies and practices to protect employee health
- (2) Measures to ensure physical distancing
- (3) Measures to ensure infection control
- (4) Communication with employees and the public
- (5) Measures to ensure equitable access to critical services.

These five key areas must be addressed as your facility develops any reopening protocols.

All businesses covered by this guidance must implement all applicable measures listed below and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is not applicable to the business.

Business name:

Facility Address:

Maximum Occupancy, per Fire or Building Code, for Standalone Grocery Stores based on 50%

Capacity:

Maximum Occupancy for all Retail Food Markets subject to this Protocol based on 50% Capacity:

Date Posted:

**A. WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT EMPLOYEE HEALTH
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO THE FACILITY)**

- ☐ Everyone who can carry out their work duties from home has been directed to do so.
- ☐ Vulnerable staff (those above age 65, those with chronic health conditions) are assigned work that can be done from home whenever possible.
- ☐ All employees have been told not to come to work if sick. Employees understand to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation and quarantine, if applicable. Workplace leave policies have been reviewed and modified to ensure that employees are not penalized when they stay home due to illness.
- ☐ Workers are provided information on employer or government-sponsored leave benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on [government programs supporting sick leave and worker's compensation for COVID-19](#), including employee's sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee's rights to workers' compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 exposures occurring between March 19 and July 5 pursuant to the Governor's [Executive Order N-62-20](#).
- ☐ Work processes are reconfigured to the extent possible to increase opportunities for employees to work from home.
- ☐ Upon being informed that one or more employees test positive for, or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (case), the employer has a plan or protocol in place to have the case(s) isolate themselves at home and require the immediate self-quarantine of all employees that had a workplace exposure to the case(s). The

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER



employer's plan should consider a protocol for all quarantined employees to have access to or be tested for COVID-19 in order to determine whether there have been additional workplace exposures, which may require additional COVID-19 control measures. See the public health guidance on [responding to COVID-19 in the workplace](#).

- ❑ [Entry screenings](#) are conducted before employees may enter the workspace, in compliance with the [DPH Entry Screening guidance](#). Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills and whether the employee is currently under isolation or quarantine orders. These checks can be done remotely or in person upon the employees' arrival. A temperature check should also be done at the worksite if feasible.
 - **Negative Screen (Cleared).** If the person has no symptom(s) and no contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 14 days, they can be cleared to enter for work for that day.
 - **Positive Screen (Not Cleared):**
 - If the person has had contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 14 days or is currently under quarantine orders, they may not enter or work in the filed and must be sent home immediately to quarantine at home. Provide them with the quarantine instructions found at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.
 - If the person is showing any of the symptoms noted above or is currently under isolation orders, they may not enter or work in the filed and must be sent home immediately to isolate at home. Provide them with the isolation instructions found at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.
- ❑ In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer must report this cluster to the Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821 or online via www.redcap.link/covidreport. When a cluster is identified at a worksite, the Department of Public Health will initiate a cluster response which includes providing infection control guidance and recommendations, technical support and site-specific control measures. A public health case manager will be assigned to the cluster investigation to help guide the facility response. The Department of Public Health will need the facility's immediate cooperation to determine whether the cluster of cases constitutes an outbreak of COVID-19.
- ❑ Employees who have contact with others are offered, at no cost, an **appropriate face mask** that covers the nose and mouth. For more information, see [LAC DPH COVID-19 Mask webpage at http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/masks](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/masks). The **face mask** is to be worn by the employee at all times during the workday when in contact or likely to come into contact with others. Employees who have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face **mask** must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves must not be used.
- ❑ All employees must wear face **masks** at all times except when working alone in private offices with closed doors or when eating or drinking. The exception made previously for employees working in cubicles with solid partitions exceeding the height of the employee while standing is overridden until further notice.
- ❑ To ensure that masks are worn consistently and correctly, employees are prohibited from eating or drinking except during their breaks when they are able to safely remove their masks and physically distance from others. At all times when eating or drinking, employees must maintain at least a six-foot distance from others. When eating or drinking, it is preferred to do so outdoors and away from others, if possible. Eating or drinking at a cubicle or workstation is preferred to eating in a breakroom if eating in a cubicle or workstation provides greater distance from and barriers between workers. COVID-19 transmission is more likely to occur when employees are present together when not wearing face **masks**.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER



- ☐ Occupancy is reduced and space between employees is maximized in any room or area used by employees for meals and/or breaks. This has been achieved by:
 - Posting a maximum occupancy that is consistent with enabling a distance of at least six feet between individuals in rooms or areas used for breaks;
 - Staggering break or mealtimes to reduce occupancy in rooms or areas used for meals and breaks; and
 - Placing tables **at least eight** feet apart and assuring six feet between seats, removing or taping seats to reduce occupancy, placing markings on floors to assure distancing, and arranging seating in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact. Use of partitions is encouraged to further prevent spread but should not be considered a substitute for reducing occupancy and maintaining physical distancing.
- ☐ Employees are instructed to wash or replace their face **masks** daily.
- ☐ Employers should consider where disposable glove use may be helpful to supplement frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer; examples are for employees who are screening others for symptoms or handling commonly touched items, such as shopping carts, hand baskets, and items to be restocked.
- ☐ All workstations are separated by at least six feet.
- ☐ Distribution areas (for curbside pickup), break rooms, restrooms and other common areas are disinfected hourly, on the following schedule:
 - Distribution area _____
 - Break rooms _____
 - Restrooms _____
 - Other _____
- ☐ Disinfectant and related supplies are available to employees at the following location(s):

- ☐ Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19 is available to all employees at the following location(s):

- ☐ Employees are allowed frequent breaks to wash their hands.
- ☐ A copy of this protocol has been distributed to each employee.
- ☐ To the extent possible, each worker is assigned their own tools, equipment and defined workspace. Sharing held items is minimized or eliminated.
- ☐ Workers are provided time during their shifts to implement cleaning practices. Cleaning assignments should be assigned during working hours as part of the employee's job duties.
- ☐ All policies described in this checklist other than those related to terms of employment are applied to staff of delivery and any other companies who may be on the premises as third parties.
- ☐ Optional—Describe other measures:

B. MEASURES TO ENSURE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- ☐ The number of customers in a stand-alone grocery store is low enough to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet between employees and customers who are not from the same household. Stand-alone grocery stores are strongly encouraged to limit their occupancy to 50% of total indoor occupancy based on applicable building or fire code occupancy. Stand-alone grocery stores are required to meter the entry and exit of customers to ensure that the physical distancing between customers and staff is met.

Maximum number of customers in the facility limited to: _____

- ☐ The number of customers in all other retail food markets is low enough to ensure physical distancing but in no case more than 50% of the maximum occupancy of the retail food market capacity, as determined by the applicable Building or Fire Code.

Maximum number of customers in the facility limited to: _____

- ☐ The retail food market must strictly and continuously meter the entry and exit of customers at all entrances in order to track occupancy to ensure compliance with indoor capacity limits. Retailers that are insufficiently or not metering or appear to be over-capacity may, at the discretion of the public health inspector, be temporarily closed until these issues are rectified as determined by the onsite public health inspector. Where possible, provide a single, clearly designated entrance and separate exits to help maintain physical distancing.
- ☐ Be prepared to queue customers outside while still maintaining physical distance, including through the use of visual cues. If necessary, an employee (or employees if there is more than one entrance) wearing an appropriate face mask may be posted near the door but at least 6 feet from the nearest customers to track occupancy and to direct customers to line up six feet apart outside the entrance if the establishment has reached its occupancy limit.
- ☐ Measures are implemented to ensure physical distancing of at least six feet between employees and customers. This can include use of physical partitions or visual cues (e.g., floor markings, colored tape, or signs to indicate where workers and/or employees should stand.)
- ☐ Measures have been taken at check-out stations to minimize exposure between cashiers and customers, such as Plexiglass barriers. Barriers should be at least 6 feet high when measured from the floor. Signs are posted near entrances, check-out lanes and registers to remind customers of physical distancing.
- ☐ Tape or other markings identify both a starting place for customers entering the check-out line and 6-foot intervals for subsequent customers who are joining the line.
- ☐ Employees have been instructed to maintain at least a six (6) feet distance from customers and from each other in all areas of the store. Employees may momentarily come closer when necessary to accept payment, deliver goods or services, or as otherwise necessary.
- ☐ Restrooms required for public use remain accessible to the public.
- ☐ Employee workstations are separated by at least 6 feet and common areas are configured to limit employee gatherings to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
- ☐ Break rooms and other common areas are configured to limit employee gatherings to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet. Where possible, outdoor break areas with shade covers and seating are created to help ensure physical distancing. In compliance with wage and hour regulations, employee breaks are staggered to help maintain physical distancing protocols.
- ☐ Physical distancing requirements are implemented at loading bays and contactless signatures have been implemented for deliveries.
- ☐ Non-employee truck drivers, delivery agents, or vendors who are required to enter retail locations are to wear appropriate face masks.

C. MEASURES FOR INFECTION CONTROL

- ☐ The HVAC system is in good, working order; to the maximum extent possible, ventilation has been increased. Effective ventilation is one of the most important ways to control small aerosol transmission. Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in offices and other spaces.
 - See [California Department of Public Health Interim Guidance for Ventilation, Filtration and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#) for detailed information.
 - Please Note: Ventilation and other indoor air quality improvements are an addition to, and not a replacement for, mandatory protections including wearing face masks (except in certain high-risk environments that require using proper respiratory protection), maintaining at least six feet of distance between people, washing hands frequently, and limiting activities that bring together people from different households.
- ☐ Symptom checks are conducted before visitors may enter the facility, in compliance with LA County DPH [Entry Screening Guidance](#). Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills and whether the individual is currently under isolation or quarantine orders. These checks can be done in person or through alternative methods such as on-line check in systems or through [signage](#) posted at the entrance to the facility stating that visitors with these symptoms should not enter the premises.
 - Negative Screen (Cleared). If the person has no symptom(s) and no contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 14 days, they can be cleared to enter the establishment for that day.
 - Positive Screen (Not Cleared):
 - If the person has had contact with a known COVID-19 case in the last 14 days or is currently under quarantine orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to quarantine at home. Provide them with the quarantine instructions found at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.
 - If the person is showing any of the symptoms noted above or is currently under isolation orders, they may not enter and must be sent home immediately to isolate at home. Provide them with the isolation instructions found at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.
- ☐ Visitors arriving at the establishment are reminded to wear a face mask at all times while in the establishment or on the grounds of the establishment. This applies to all adults and to children 2 years of age and older. Individuals who have been instructed not to wear a face mask by their medical provider must wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves must not be used. To support the safety of your employees and other visitors, a face mask should be made available to visitors who arrive without them.
- ☐ Customers arriving at the site with children must ensure that their children stay next to a parent, avoid touching any other person or any item that does not belong to them, and are masked if age permits.
- ☐ Contactless payment systems are in place or, if not feasible, payment systems are sanitized regularly. Describe:

- ☐ Common areas and frequently touched objects in the customer pickup and payment (e.g., tables, doorknobs or handles, credit card readers) are disinfected on an hourly basis during business hours using EPA approved disinfectants.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER



- ☐ Workspaces and the entire facility are cleaned at least daily, with restrooms and frequently touched areas/objects cleaned more frequently.
- ☐ Retail store hours have been adjusted to provide adequate time for regular deep cleaning and product stocking. Stagger stocking so that employees are in different aisles.
- ☐ Where possible, encourage the use of debit or credit cards by customers. Require customers who bring reusable bags to bag their own purchases, or, if an employee bags the groceries, they should change gloves after handling customer bags. Encourage customers to clean their reusable bags frequently.
- ☐ Customers arriving at the site with children must ensure that their children stay next to a parent, avoid touching any other person or any item that does not belong to them, and are masked if age permits.
- ☐ Areas which sell ready to eat foods have signs posted instructing customers that food and beverages may not be consumed within the store **except in designated dining areas, if applicable.**
- ☐ In-store bars, soda fountains, self-service food items, bulk-bin options and product sampling have been discontinued.
- ☐ Where possible, hands-free devices, including motion sensor lights, contactless payment systems, automatic soap and paper towel dispensers and timecard systems have been installed.
- ☐ Hand sanitizer and trash cans are available to the public at or near the entrance of the facility.
- ☐ Provide a method to sanitize shopping cart and hand basket handles – either by providing sanitizing wipes adjacent to the storage area for shopping carts and baskets or by having an employee manage the process between customer uses.
- ☐ All payment portals, pens, and styluses are disinfected on an hourly basis.
- ☐ Prohibit the use of customer's reusable cups for filling beverages.
- ☐ Optional - Describe other measures (e.g., providing senior-only hours, incentivizing non-peak sales):

D. MEASURES THAT COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC

- ☐ A copy of this protocol or the **facility's printed Los Angeles County COVID-19 Safety Compliance Certificate** is posted at all public entrances to the facility. **For more information or to complete the COVID-19 safety compliance self-certification program, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/covid19cert.htm>. Facilities must keep a copy of the Protocols onsite at the facility for review, upon request.**
- ☐ Signage at the entry and/or where customers line up notifies customers of options for and advantages preordering and prepayment.
- ☐ Signage is posted that reminds customers to maintain social distancing of six (6) feet, **to wear a face mask at all times**, wash hands or use sanitizer upon entry, stay home if they are ill or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, and to communicate changes to service offerings. Signage should be posted in clearly visible locations, include pictograms, and be made available digitally (e.g., through e-mail). **See the [County DPH COVID-19 Guidance webpage](#) for additional resources and examples of signage that can be used by businesses.**
- ☐ **Signage is posted that reminds customers that there is no eating or drinking inside the food market retail except in the designated dining areas, if applicable.**
- ☐ Online outlets of the establishment (website, social media, etc.) provide clear information about store hours, required use of face **masks**, policies in regard to preordering, prepayment, pickup and/or delivery and other relevant issues.

E. MEASURES THAT ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

- ☐ Dedicated shopping hours for vulnerable populations, including seniors and those medically vulnerable have been instituted, if appropriate, preferably at a time following a complete cleaning.
- ☐ Services that are critical to the customers/clients have been prioritized.
- ☐ Transactions or services that can be offered remotely have been moved on-line.
- ☐ Measures are instituted to assure access to goods and services for customers who have mobility limitations and/or are at high risk in public spaces.

**Any additional measures not included above should be listed on separate pages,
which the business should attach to this document.**

**You may contact the following person with any
questions or comments about this protocol:**

Business Contact Name:

Phone number:

Date Last Revised:
