



48 Grandview Road, Suite #2
Bow, NH 03304
603 225 9748
www.retailnh.com
shop@retailnh.com

NH Retail Association Presentation to the Governor's Economic Re-Opening Task Force Friday, April 23, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is Nancy Kyle and I am the President/CEO of the NH Retail Association. We were founded in 1966 and our mission is to advocate for, promote and support New Hampshire Retailers. Our members range in size from one person stores to large, multi-location businesses. Most importantly, 95% of our members are NH based, independent businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Task Force.

Retail Background

- Retail is America's largest private sector employer, and most retail companies are small businesses.
- An overwhelming majority of retail businesses (99%) employ fewer than 50 people.
- Retail trade establishments have the largest # of employees, 94,410, among all industry sectors in New Hampshire.
- The state has over 18,000 retailers
- 6 out of 10 of the largest NH-based private companies are retailers.

Things to Consider For Re-Opening

- A large portion of retail sales comes from cross border shopping. Retailers will have problems because of MA being a hot spot, 41,000 cases over the southern border is a huge problem.
- Even if stores are opened, getting people in the stores will be an issue.
- Need to get people out of their homes.
- No one is on the streets. In downtown areas - people need to get back to work, their offices and play.
- Residents need to feel safe and we need to educate the public.
- A PSA saying it's safe, encouraging people to get back to work, retailers and restaurants would be helpful.
- Perhaps a hotline for businesses to call with questions.
- When lifting stay at home orders and letting people shop and go out to eat - do it mid-week to keep numbers down. Ease into it.
- It is anticipated that retailers will struggle to re-staff their stores, in spite of the number of people currently unemployed.
- Most stores will be open with 1 or 2 employees.
- Just prior to stores closing, hours and staffing were reduced dramatically – commensurate with the drop in traffic / sales. +90% of the staff has been laid off or furloughed. These people now make more on unemployment +\$600 from the federal government, than they made when working.

- Can't make store employees enforce state mandates. If guidelines say customers need to wear face coverings, state needs to enforce that with law enforcement.
- Retailers need protection against liability. If they are doing their best to follow whatever guidelines are established and a visitor to their store still catches the virus, they should not be held liable for that.
- On limiting occupancy - the retailer should regulate the number of customers at one time. Square footage for customers is not the same as square footage of building. Shelving, layout and merchandising is different in all stores. The objective is to prevent multiple customers in the same space at one time.
- Don't mandate cashless transactions. Many consumers do not have credit cards, especially lower income ones - don't discriminate against customers.
- Don't use the term "personal protective equipment" in any recommendations and try to use the term "cloth face coverings" vs. "masks." PPE has a specific federal definition, e.g. N95 masks and other equipment that is best reserved for health care professionals or first responders, and using it will be advocating for something far more restrictive than intended.

Open for Business - A Blueprint for Shopping Safely

Now is the time to prepare for the entire retail sector to safely re-open, with a focus on the health and wellness of both our employees and our customers. When possible, the government should provide guidelines and recommendations rather than mandates.

Allowing Curbside Pickup and Delivery - Phase 1 - Most are happening

- Retailers have established and implemented safety protocols to allow curbside pickup and in home deliveries in New Hampshire. Currently retailers can only take credit cards, not cash.
- In these operations, a limited number of employees are allowed in stores that are closed to the public to fulfill online orders and deliver purchases to customers who drive or walk up, observing appropriate social distancing.
- These operations have been consistent across all towns and retailers are following established social distancing, hygiene and sanitation guidelines.
- [We would like to see non-essential retailers be allowed to open their indoor retail space as soon as possible by appointment or reservation with limited customers.](#)
- [Allow retailers to take cash as well as credit cards.](#)

Re-opening Stores to Public, with Social Distancing Protocols & Reduced Occupancy - Phase 2

- Retailers encourage state governments to consider the CDC recommendations, state health departments, and other health experts to determine when to move to start opening.
- It is imperative that businesses open in ways that allow more commerce than the current status as soon as possible.
- During this phase, retailers will open stores to the public with robust protocols in place to ensure COVID-19 does not revert to protect the health and safety of employees and customers and mitigating the spread of the virus.
- As the Governor considers new Executive Orders to allow the re-opening of all retail stores to the public, we strongly urge the state to create clarity for all retailers, local governments, law enforcement, and consumers with consistent social distancing, hygiene and sanitation guidelines.

- **A single statewide standard is the best way to make sure the reopening of the economy is safe, efficient, and productive for all.**
- We also ask the State to establish personal responsibility expectations for citizens as they move about in public spaces, such as requiring cloth face coverings, washing hands frequently, and staying home when ill.

Recommended Protocols for Retail Employees and Customers (Phase 2)

Social Distancing – Employees

- Ensure employees stay 6 feet apart whenever possible.
- Adjust seating in break rooms, cafeterias, and other common areas to reflect social distancing practices.
- Prohibit gatherings of employees during working hours, permit employees to take breaks and lunch outside, in their office or personal workspace or in such other areas where proper social distancing is attainable.
- Restrict interaction between employees and outside visitors or delivery drivers. Implement touchless receiving practices if possible.
- Adjust training/onboarding practices to limit number of people involved and allow for 6 foot spacing; use virtual/video/audio training when possible.
- Limit meetings to 10 people.
- Discourage employees from using colleagues' phones, desks, workstations, radios, handhelds/wearables, or other work tools and equipment.
- Encourage the use of gloves when using community technology such as POS, cash registers, phones, copy machines, etc.
- Prohibit handshaking and other unnecessary person to person contact in the workplace.

Social Distancing – Customers

- Retailer may choose to limit occupancy in store based on shopping space.
- Place conspicuous signage 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.
- Establish hours of operation, wherever possible, that permit access solely to high-risk individuals, as defined by the CDC.
- Demarcate six feet of spacing in check-out lines to demonstrate appropriate spacing for social distancing.
- Ensure six feet of distance between customers/cashiers and baggers, except at the moment of payment and/or exchange of goods.
- Arrange for contactless pay options, pickup, and/or delivery of goods whenever possible. But allow for cash payments as well.

Hygiene

- Require infection control practices, such as regular hand washing, coughing and sneezing etiquette, and proper tissue usage and disposal.
- Provide employees break time for repeated handwashing throughout the workday.
- Provide sanitization materials, such as hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, to employees.

Sanitization

- Require frequent sanitization of high-touch areas like restrooms, fitting rooms, doors, PIN pads, common areas.
- Adjust shift start/end times or shorten operating hours to allow downtime for thorough cleaning.
- Provide sanitization materials, such as sanitizing wipes, to employees to clean 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.
- Quarantine returned merchandise for 48 hours before returning items to the sales floor.

Protective Face Coverings

- Encourage workers wear cloth face coverings while on the premises. Request customers do same.

Health Screening of Employees

- Screening and evaluation of associates (before or as they arrive for shifts) for signs of illness (such as a fever over 100.4, cough or shortness of breath).
- Requiring associates who exhibit signs of illness not to report to work, and if necessary to seek medical attention.

Establish Protection then Lift All Restrictions - Phase 3

- Retailers encourage state governments to consider CDC guidelines, state health departments, and other health experts to determine when to move to phase 3.
- During this phase, retailers have discretion to remove COVID-related operational protocols except for those related to enhanced sanitization and employee health screening practices.
- During this final phase of COVID-19 response, retail health and safety protocols are designed to maintain sanitization while returning operations to the **new normal**.
- Consistent with health expert guidance, we urge the Governor to suspend state-wide emergency orders at this time.

Recommended Protocols for Retailers for Phase 3

Sanitization

- Provide sanitization materials, such as hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes, to staff
- Frequent sanitization of high-touch areas like restrooms, breakrooms, credit card machines, keypads, counters and shopping carts
- Clean and disinfect high-touch areas routinely particularly in spaces that are accessible to staff, customers, and suppliers and ensure cleaning procedures following a known or potential exposure in a facility are in compliance with CDC recommendations.

Employee Guidelines

- Require infection control practices, such as regular hand washing, coughing and sneezing etiquette, and proper tissue usage and disposal.
- Provide employees break time for repeated handwashing throughout the workday.
- Separate employees who become sick during the day and send home.
- Encourage employees to not come to work if not feeling well.

There is no doubt that even under the most optimistic of scenarios, New Hampshire families will be adjusting to a “new normal” for some time to come. The entire retail sector is prepared to meet this challenge and give consumers confidence in our ability to safely and warmly welcome them back into our stores. We appreciate the tireless efforts of Governor Sununu to safeguard our communities throughout this crisis, and we are ready to work together to safely re-open our economy.