

Guidelines for Non-Critical Retail, Phase II

In Phase I, non-critical retail establishments were permitted to begin limited, in-person customer shopping. These Phase II guidelines supplement those issued for Phase I and summarize steps Rhode Island is asking all non-critical retailers to take. All retailers should also follow the general business guidelines. It should be noted that critical retailers, including grocery stores and pharmacies, continue to operate under existing Executive Order and Department of Business Regulation guidelines. Please note that all retailers must also operate in accordance with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) regulations [Safe Activities By Covered Entities During the COVID-19 Emergency](#) (216-RICR-50-15-7). If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact the Department of Business Regulation [via the online form](#) or at 401.462.9500.

Phase II operations

In-person shopping will be permitted in non-critical retail stores with the following guidelines:

Capacity and browsing guidelines: If a store permits in-person shopping, capacity is set by regulation and will be limited to one (1) customer per 150 square feet in individual retail stores and in common areas. Browsing is encouraged to be brief and limited.

- Stores are encouraged to have exclusive hours for those in high-risk populations, including seniors, or offer other accommodations for high-risk populations.
- Customer pre-orders and pickup of merchandise are encouraged; this pre-order/pickup approach should be enabled by retailers.
- Retailers are encouraged to minimize customer use of shared surfaces by cleaning high touch surfaces frequently and reduce merchandise on floor, where possible, to reduce handling.

Physical distancing: Stores should mark six-foot distances to guide customers in maintaining a safe distance while in line or in high traffic areas of the space. It is recommended that check-out areas have see-through barriers between employees and customers.

Contactless payments are encouraged.

Sampling and dressing rooms: Retailers must temporarily discontinue the sampling or application of personal goods (i.e. make-up, perfume, lotion). Retailers are encouraged to close dressing rooms. Businesses that wish to operate their dressing rooms or for whom the operation of a dressing room is essential to their business model must outline procedures for the sanitization of clothing tried on in dressing rooms between customers and for cleaning the dressing rooms frequently (e.g. between uses) in their *COVID-19 Control Plan*.

General guidance: All businesses should also review the [general business guidance document](#) that is posted on Reopening RI's website.

Retailers are encouraged to offer hand sanitizer to customers at store entrances and exits.

Reopening checklist and plan: Non-critical retail businesses must review and sign the reopening poster available on Reopening RI's website (in [English](#) and/or in [Spanish](#)) www.reopeningRI.com in

order to conduct customer-facing business (interacting in person with customers) . The checklist must be posted visibly within your retail establishment before reopening for business. Retail businesses must write a [COVID-19 Control Plan in accordance with the template](#) posted on Reopening RI's website before conducting customer-facing business (interacting in person with customers).

Expanded Non-critical retail operations allowed in Phase II

Retailers that do not have an independent, exterior entrance may begin limited in-person shopping in Phase II. This includes stores accessible via an interior entrance from a shared hallway or interior concourse.

Multi-retailer complexes (including malls)

Operators of multi-retailer complexes, such as shopping malls, whether in a single building or a series of connected buildings, should follow the appropriate guidance in operating each component of their facility under their control. Recreation, entertainment, and food service areas must follow the guidance appropriate to those settings. In a multi-tenant facility, such as a shopping mall, capacity limitations must be maintained within all common areas and within individual business settings.

Multi-retailer complexes must organize public or shared spaces to maintain physical distancing and prevent congregating. This includes removing, or otherwise preventing use of, seating areas and seating in food courts, marking six-foot (6') spacing in high-traffic areas, and encouraging six (6) feet of spacing in lines outside of the facility or for individual uses within the facility. Consider posting signage or using ropes to direct customers and limit bottlenecks and encourage flow in high-density common areas. Consider marking floors with directional indicators (arrows) to prevent customers from passing by each other with less than six (6) feet of distance.

Multi-retailer complex (mall) personnel should be assigned to ensure that there is no congregating, that traffic flows smoothly, and that physical distancing is maintained.

Tenants who rent and operate discrete spaces within a facility are responsible for following the applicable guidance for their operation, including adherence to all general business guidelines as well as setting-specific guidelines on capacity, sanitation, and hygiene.

Market Retail: Flea markets, yard sales, and outdoor retail

Under Phase II of Rhode Island's reopening plan, the following protocols and guidance apply to all market retail, which includes flea markets, yard sales, and other outdoor retail operations, referred to as "market retail". Farmer's markets, meaning operations where vendors primarily sell food, plants, flowers, and/or agricultural, farm, and seafood products, should follow the [agricultural farmer's markets and/or on-farm markets guidance](#), available on Reopening RI's website. This guidance does not apply to Farmer's Markets where vendors sell food, plants, flowers and/or agricultural, farm or seafood products. Retail operations with vendors who primarily sell products not included in the previous sentence must follow this guidance.

Market retail operators and all vendors participating in market retail should review this guidance and the [general business guidance](#) that is posted on Reopening RI's website. Market retail operators and all vendors must review and sign the reopening checklist poster (in [English](#) and/or in [Spanish](#)) and prepare a [COVID-19 Control Plan in accordance with the template](#) and the required addendum (see below) before conducting customer-facing business. (These documents are all posted on Reopening RI's website.)

Addendum to COVID-19 Control Plan

Additionally, the COVID-19 Control Plan must include an addendum which details the operations and resources available to vendors and customers. This Plan must be available at the market retail site, and should be communicated to all vendors, and must be kept on-site and made available in the case of a complaint or visit by local or state officials. Market retail operators are responsible for implementing their Plan and adhering to the limitations and restrictions below. Market retail operators are encouraged to designate staff or volunteers to implement the Plan and assist in encouraging physical distancing and preventing congregating in and around the market retail area, especially if the market retail operation is in a larger park or open area. The Plan must include information on:

- **Physical distancing and capacity**, including a maximum number of retailers and attendees and plans for ensuring physical distancing and capacity are maintained
- **Plans for following general business/organization guidelines**, including screening staff, vendors, and customers upon entering the market retail area; requiring use of facial coverings/masks; hygiene, cleaning, and sanitization procedures; and communication plans

Market Retail Guidelines

Physical Distancing and Capacity: Market managers and staff must take the following measures to control capacity and maintain physical distancing:

- **Vendors** must be separated by at least six (6) feet.
- **Customer capacity and staffing:**
 - Markets may not allow more than one (1) customer per 150 square feet of overall shopping area at a time.
 - Markets must designate staff to monitor physical distancing and capacity, both in the market area overall and in individual booths/stalls. Staff must count the number of customers entering and exiting the entire area and at individual vendor spaces.
 - Market operators may require individual vendors to assist in maintaining physical distancing and capacity restrictions within their booth/stall areas.
- **Customers in booth/stall areas:** In order to ensure that markets meet the standard of no more than one (1) customer per 150 square feet of retail area at a time (note that this applies both to individual booths/stalls, as well as the area as a whole), markets should use the following customer (or household) limits for booths and stalls unless an alternate method is used to ensure no more than one (1) customer per 150 square feet of shopping area is permitted at a time:
 - Up to one (1) customer (or household) at a time for booths/stalls with less than 15 feet of retail frontage and
 - Up to two (2) customers (or households) at a time for booths that are more than 15 feet wide.
- **Customer traffic flow**
 - Control access points by clearly marking entrance and exit points and preventing access to the retail area other than at those clearly marked entrance/exit points.
 - Markets should designate walkways that are at least six feet away from shopping areas. One-way walkways are encouraged.
 - Waiting areas: Markets should designate areas outside of the shopping area and outside of walkways for customers to wait to enter stalls/booths. Markets should designate six-foot (6') spacing to indicate where customers should wait and ensure that physical distance is maintained.
 - Operators should designate staff and use signage or barriers, such as ropes, to guide customers and to monitor physical distancing. Clearly mark six feet (6') of spacing in

lines and other high-traffic areas, and consider ways to encourage spacing if there are lines waiting to enter.

Hygiene, Cleaning and Sanitation procedures: The [general business guidelines](#) available on Reopening RI's website should be adapted to the market retail setting and the market retail plan must include the following:

- Location of handwashing stations with soap and water and/or sanitizer must be identified in the Market Retail Plan. It is essential that handwashing stations and hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol be readily available. This includes having a sufficient quantity of both to facilitate and encourage regular hand hygiene for staff, vendors and customers.
- Any special hygiene instructions for vendors, such as whether they are required to have hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol available at their stand/booth;
- Directions for market staff, vendors, and customers to utilize cloth face coverings, in accordance with Rhode Island Executive Orders, as well as any other state and local guidance and requirements;
- Operator's plan to frequently disinfect high-touch surfaces throughout the market and assist vendors in booth/stand sanitization; and
- Information for staff and vendors on where they can find sanitizing materials throughout the market and plans for assisting vendors in sanitization and cleaning of their booths/stands, including frequently disinfecting high-touch surfaces such as credit card machines.

Food and beverage: The sale of food and beverages intended for immediate consumption, inclusive of mobile food trucks, is not permitted unless the operator and vendor follow the setting guidelines for restaurants. If the market retail operators intend to include food or beverage sales in their market retail operation, they must include information on that use in the COVID-19 Control Plan. Food trucks cannot offer food for onsite consumption at, or adjacent to, a market retail operation unless they follow all restaurant setting guidelines.

Additional guidelines and considerations:

- Staggered schedules, breaks, and/or lunch times to minimize the number of staff interactions with one another;
- Booth/stand operators are encouraged to use contactless payments such as credit card machines, online payment application platforms, pre-order and pre-payment of products, or rounding up product prices to the nearest dollar;
- Prior to and after handling currency, hands should be properly washed or sanitized;
- Use of pre-packaged items, where applicable, to limit shoppers' handling of items and to keep customers moving along;
- Directions for individual booth/stands to encourage customers not to handle items or to open or show items to customers instead of having customers handle multiple items.
- Communication of market activity plans to the public in advance of opening. Operators should consider posting signs and disseminating information on websites and social media to explain any changes or extra precautions taken to limit exposure to COVID-19.