



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS REGULATION
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Bldg. 69-2
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

GUIDELINES FOR RETAIL AND GROCERS

[Executive Order 20-09](#) issued by the Governor on March 22, 2020, requires all businesses remaining open, to the extent practicable, to implement CDC guidance on social distancing, hygiene and sanitation measures. The Department of Business Regulations has developed guidelines in order to assist Rhode Island businesses in complying with social distancing requirements and to maintain a high level of sanitation and employee hygiene in line with CDC guidance.

In furtherance of the Executive Order 20-09 directives and to prevent crowding at retail and grocery stores, the following guidelines are being instituted as of March 26, 2020 at 5:00 PM:

Social distancing:

1. Allow no more than 20% of stated fire capacity in the store at a time (note that this reduced capacity is approximately 150 square feet per person¹). Require staff to count the number of customers entering and exiting the store and to enforce limits.
2. Clearly mark 6' spacing in lines and other high-traffic areas and consider ways to encourage spacing if there are lines outside. Consider posting signage or using ropes to direct customers and to limit bottlenecks/encourage flow in high-density areas of stores.
3. Designate employees to monitor social distancing and assist customers.
4. Maximize space between customers and employees at checkout.

Cleaning and sanitation:

5. Designate employee(s) to ensure the cleaning guidelines set by the CDC are followed.
6. Discontinue self-serve foods and product sampling.

Limit time in store, especially for vulnerable populations:

7. Exclusive hours for those in high-risk populations, including seniors, where stores will limit their capacity to 10% of fire capacity at any time (figures to 300 square feet per person).
8. For our larger grocery stores and retailers (those with greater than 25,000 SF), we are encouraging them to offer pickup and/or delivery options.

For questions on these guidelines, please call the Department of Business Regulation at 401-889-5550 or submit your questions online on the [Department of Business Regulation's web form](#).

¹ To calculate the maximum number of occupants permitted, please either (a) divide the maximum capacity allowed by 5 or (b) divide the total square footage of the space by 150. 20% capacity limit does not include employees.