

Guidelines for retail Phase III

In Phase III, critical and non-critical retail establishments may continue operating for in-person customer shopping. All retailers should also follow the general business guidelines and 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 401.889.5550.

Phase III operations

In-person shopping is permitted in retail stores with the following guidelines:

Capacity and browsing guidelines:

- Capacity is limited to one (1) customer per 100 square feet in individual retail stores and in common areas.
- Critical retail stores are required and all retail stores are encouraged to have exclusive hours for those in high-risk populations, including seniors, at a reduced capacity (recommended not to exceed 1 customer per 200 square feet which is equivalent to approximately 15% of fire marshal capacity) or offer other accommodations for those in high-risk populations.
- Retailers are recommended to offer pre-order and pickup options.
- Customers are encouraged to minimize the time they spend browsing.

Physical distancing: Stores should mark six-foot distances to guide customers in maintaining a safe distance while in line or in high traffic areas. It is recommended that check-out areas have rigid, non-porous physical barriers between employees and customers.

Contactless payments are encouraged.

Reopening checklist and plan: Retail businesses must review and sign the reopening poster available on [Reopening RI's website](#) (in [English](#) and/or in [Spanish](#)) 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). All businesses should also review the general business guidance document that is posted on Reopening RI's website.

Sampling, dressing rooms, and handling merchandise:

- Retailers must temporarily discontinue self-serve sampling and application of personal goods (i.e. make-up, perfume, lotion). Retailers may offer customers samples using single-use applicators or no-touch options. Retailers offering samples should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol between each customer.
- 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 the cleaning of dressing rooms frequently (e.g. between uses) in their *COVID-19 Control Plan*.
- Customers are encouraged to minimize the handling of merchandise. Retailers are encouraged to post signage encouraging customer compliance in areas with frequent customer handling of merchandise or may also consider reducing merchandise on retail floors or making other physical changes, where possible, to reduce customer

handling of merchandise.

- Retailers are encouraged to offer hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to customers at store entrances and exits.

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, 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 III of Rhode Island's reopening plan, the following protocols and guidance continue to 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, 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 100 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 100 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 100 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 10 feet of retail frontage and
 - Up to two (2) customers (or households) at a time for booths that are more than 10 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.
 - 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.

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- 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:

- Use staggered schedules, breaks, and/or lunch times to minimize the number of staff interactions with one another;
- 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;
- Wash or sanitize hands prior to and after handling currency;
- Use pre-packaged items, where applicable, to limit shoppers' handling of items and to keep customers moving along;
- Post 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;
- Communicate 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.