Sampling of the Food Retailers COVID-19 Precautions & Best Practices

- Managers along with all store associates should be trained on social distancing techniques & general health best practices. These communications have become part of daily management routines. Stores are adhering to CDC recommended guidelines.

- Store associates are wiping down and disinfecting frequently touched areas (shopping cart handles, pin pads, conveyor belts) as often as needed throughout the day.

- “Golden hours” for customers 60+ every day. Many retailers are offering special hours for older customers or customers with weakened immune systems one or two days per week.

- Set maximum quantities on items to help supply as many customers as possible, make no commitments on inventory and no guarantees on when or if product will arrive.

- Adjust policy on returns until further notice. Do you want to implement a temporary All Sales Are Final Policy?

- Online fulfillment/Curbside Pick-up: For those retailers who have an infrastructure in place for the ordering and delivery of groceries. Those with capabilities are helping reduce the number of customers coming into stores.

- Change any automated greetings and options within the greeting you have to better reflect your company’s situation and update your website with information as well (on the homepage).

- Placing store signage that requests single-family shopping trips during peak hours.

- Many stores are installing clear plastic guards at registers. Because the register area doesn’t allow for the cashier and customer to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart per CDC guidelines, plexiglass guards are being added for additional protection in one of the most vulnerable areas of the store.

- Practices to limit contact whenever a cashier needs to look at an ID or process a cash transaction.

- Whenever possible, stores are opening only every other register lane to create further distancing between customers at checkout instead of opening lanes right next to each other.

- Signage in stores that reminds customers to stand at least 6 feet apart from others, plus other guidelines from the CDC. Those signs can be placed at every register, on front doors, and in many places throughout the store, including the deli and pharmacy.

- Retailers may have tape on the floors at each register so customers understand the 6-foot distance they should keep from others. The length of a standard shopping cart creates natural spacing for “Social Distancing”.

- Require customers who use reusable bags to bag their own groceries. Remind customers to wash reusable bags and totes after each use and to store bags and totes in a clean, cool and dry location.

- Per LD 2167, retailers may now use paper, plastic or reusable bags throughout the state or continue with their town’s previous local ordinance structure including fees or specific bag restrictions. You may or may not allow reusable bags in your store.
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Retailers are adding hand washing stations outside of their stores. “That’s our back up, if/when we run out of hand sanitizer for customer use in-store. Currently we have a greeter at the entrance informing customers carts have already been sanitized and to grab one wipe to use during their shopping trip.”

"Door Concierge," an employee who opens and closes the door to customers, making sure to limit the number inside to just 10.

Photos from Breaux Mart in New Orleans, Dierbergs Market, Piggly Wiggly and NGA.

Sampling of the precautions from Connecticut Food Association and Business Best Practices During COVID-19 from The Convenience Distribution Association (CDA), and Maine Public’s ‘Maine Grocery Stores Take Steps To Keep Shoppers And Employees Safe During Outbreak’ 3/26/20