Physical Distancing Guidance for Businesses

Physical distancing has been demonstrated to be an effective tool to “flatten the curve” of COVID-19. Businesses that continue to provide in-store service to the public should incorporate some internal policies when trying to inform patrons/staff to practice physical distancing. A list of recommendations is provided below, however, based on availability of staff, supplies and/or space each facility must determine what measures can be used effectively. Some recommendations include:

- Barriers
- Visible signs
- Traffic arrows and other markings
- Separate entrance/exits
- Limit the number of patrons
- Online/Phone orders
- Staggered check-outs/self service

Barriers

Barriers or clear partitions can be used to keep staff and patrons separated at check-outs. Barriers can also serve to direct customer traffic flow, both inside and outside of the building.

Visible Signs

Visible signs placed outside, at the entrance and throughout the store can reinforce physical distancing and other public health measures. Statements include maintaining 6 feet of separation, cough/sneeze etiquette, and washing your hands.

Traffic Arrows and Other Markings

Traffic arrows and separation markings using visible tape can be placed on floors and walkways to direct the flow of patrons inside or outside the store. Like vehicle traffic, this will help to ensure patrons have their own lanes and are less likely to encroach into the 6-foot zone.

Put lines of tape or other markings on the floor two metres (six feet) apart at any location within your business where people may line up or congregate (for example, wait line outside store, the checkout counter, service desk, display, etc.)

Separate Entrance/Exits

If a store has two doors, one can be designated for incoming patrons and one for outgoing patrons. This will prevent congestion in the entry/exits.

Limit the number of Patrons

Limiting the number of patrons is the most effective way to ensure patrons have plenty of room to shop without encroaching the space of other patrons. Business operators can determine a practical number...
of patrons that can shop comfortably, based on the square footage of the establishment. Limiting the number of patrons can be achieved by having a designated door person to allow patrons in and/or assigning a staff person to control entry. Some stores have a security door button that usually operates after hours but could be used to ensure that people are only allowed in by staff.

**Online/Phone Orders**

Online and phone orders allow patrons to pre-order and pick up at a designated time. This would discourage congregation at counters and check-outs. Drive-thru and curbside pick-up offer convenience and help to ensure social distancing. With regards to restaurants, these options allow preparation of food in a timely fashion and limit the time patrons have to be in premises. Delivery is also an option for many premises, either by providing this service directly or through a third party service (i.e. local taxi service or an online delivery service.) Transactions should minimize contact. Mobile food operations should set up on a site that allows adequate separation of vehicles and patrons and should discourage gathering or eating in vehicles.

**Staggered Checkouts/Self-Service**

Staggering the checkouts allows adequate separation for patrons and cashiers. If possible, the cash closest to the exit door should not be used in order to avoid congestion. Self-service can also offer clearance between staff and patrons.

**Cleaning and Hand Hygiene**

While physical distancing is important, so too is regular cleaning/disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces like door handles, debit machines, telephones, computer monitors, keyboards, etc.

Grocery cart handles should be disinfected between each use, either by store staff or the clients themselves.

Proper hand hygiene is also important for staff and clients. Follow these tips to keep hands clean and minimize contact with others:

- Do not shake hands. Instead, greet your customers with a smile or a wave.
- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer if water is not available, between serving clients, and frequently throughout the day.
- While some clients will need to use cash, encourage the use of debit or credit when possible.
- Make hand sanitizer available for clients and your staff.
- Place paper tissues near doorways for people to use to open door handles. Provide a trash can next to the door for immediate disposal of the tissue.
- When emptying the garbage, take care not to touch used tissues with your hands.
- Lining the garbage with a plastic bag makes waste disposal easier and safer.