

Retail Reopening Guidelines as of May 19, 2020

As provincial governments in Canada begin to lift their respective emergency measures, keeping track of the different guidelines is a challenge. This chart summarizes the reopening guidelines applicable to retailers in Canada for those jurisdictions that have released a re-opening plan as of 10 a.m. ET on May 19, 2020.

Retail stores are currently set to re-open on the following dates:

Date	Province	Additional Notes
May 4	Manitoba	Provided in-store occupancy allows for staff and customers to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres
May 4	Quebec (excluding Montreal)	Retail businesses outside Montreal with a door to the outside used by customers; access through indoor common areas is prohibited
May 8	New Brunswick	
May 8	Ontario	Garden centres and nurseries
May 9	Ontario	Hardware and safety supply stores
May 11	Ontario	Retail stores with a street entrance can open if they offer curbside pickup.
May 14	Alberta	Some businesses will be permitted to reopen in all areas of Alberta except the cities of Calgary and Brooks.
May 19	British Columbia	
May 19	Saskatchewan	
May 19	Ontario	Retail services that are not in shopping malls and have separate street-front entrances
May 22	Prince Edward Island	Details not yet announced. Note that the Environmental Health Office will conduct both random and complaint-based inspections anytime after May ^{1st} to ensure enforcement. Those not compliant are subject to an escalating approach of warnings, fine and closures, depending on the situation.
May 25	Quebec (Montreal)	Retail stores in Montreal with a door to the outside that is usually used by customers; access through indoor common areas is prohibited

The [Yukon](#) has not yet released reopening dates. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut have not yet released reopening plans. Retail businesses in the [Northwest Territories](#) have remained open.

Important Context: Reopening plans change regularly, and this chart provides a snapshot as of the date listed above. The requirements outlined below have been harmonized in an effort to pair materially similar requirements, but each jurisdiction's reopening plans contain additional detail. Some jurisdictions make compliance legally required, while others frame these requirements as guidance. You can access each plan through the links included above. Organizations should also be mindful that other laws, such as occupational health and safety laws, may impose additional obligations. Please see our [Return to the Workplace Playbook](#) for more information.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
General									
Ensure employees remain at home if they are ill with COVID-19 symptoms.	✓	✓ ¹	✓	✓ ²	✓	✓ ³	✓ ⁴	✓	✓ ⁵
Ask customers to return home if they are ill with COVID-19 symptoms.		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓ ⁶	✓
Develop an operational plan outlining how to meet the requisite guidelines, including a plan for cleaning and disinfecting.			✓	✓	✓	✓ ⁷	✓ ⁸	✓	
Post signs indicating COVID-19 protocols. This may include proper hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and physical distancing protocols.	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Post information on COVID-19 risks/symptoms.					✓	✓	✓ ⁹		
Post guidance on entrances including screening information for all employees, volunteer and patrons.		✓			✓ ¹⁰				
Provide online ordering, delivery, or curbside pickup, where possible.	✓ ¹¹	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Provide information to employees about worker health and safety, including proper hygiene practices and physical distance protocols.		✓ ¹²		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Provide employee training on possible COVID-19 transmission points in the workplace, and any policies and procedures.	✓								✓ ¹³
Eliminate at-the-door payment methods for delivery.	✓								
Pre-screen staff for COVID symptoms.		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Ensure staff self-monitor and self-screen for symptoms.		✓ ¹⁴	✓ ¹⁵	✓	✓ ¹⁶	✓	✓ ¹⁷		

1 In Manitoba, employees should identify an area that an employee can self-isolate in and develop a plan, if they become ill while at work.

2 In PEI, management must clearly communicate to all staff the exclusion policy in place for any employee displaying symptoms of COVID-19. If a staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19 at work they should immediately perform hand hygiene, report to manager, avoid contact with staff and leave as soon as it is safe to do so. Symptomatic staff will be required to self-isolate until they are tested and the results are confirmed. If the test results are negative for COVID-19 but the staff member remains ill/symptomatic, they should remain on sick leave.

3 In Quebec, employers should develop an isolation and case management procedure in case a worker feels symptoms in the workplace, including a workplace disinfection procedure.

4 Alberta offers further guidance on how to deal with sick employees or volunteers that have not been diagnosed. Individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) must remain in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms. These individuals must be sent home immediately and asked to maintain at least 2 metres of distance from other employees, volunteers and patrons while exiting the business, and maintain hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, as necessary, as they are exiting the facility. Arrangements should be made for transport home where needed; public transportation like buses, taxis or ride sharing should be avoided. Once a sick individual has left the workplace, clean and disinfect all surfaces and areas that they may have come into contact with. If an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19, Alberta Health Services may be in contact with the business to provide the necessary public health guidance.

5 Employees must be sent home immediately if they have a fever, cough, runny nose or sore throat. They must call the health center or Yellowknife public health for advice, and self-isolate. They can return when approved by a health care provider. Employees should also follow physical distancing when they are not at work.

6 BC encourages routine screening and questions of customers for symptoms checking

7 In Quebec, suppliers, subcontractors, partners and customers should be informed of the measures implemented in relation to COVID-19.

8 In Alberta, this information should be provided to employees, volunteers and patrons. These notifications should also include information about how individuals can mitigate risks of transmission.

9 Information posters are available at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-help-prevent-the-spread-poster>.

10 The [COVID-19 Screening Tool](#) should also be posted and made visible at business entrances.

11 In Ontario, curbside pickup or delivery are mandatory requirements.

12 Employees who are required to report for work in-person should be encouraged to take public transit during non-peak times as much as possible. Employers should also reassure employees and volunteers that public health officials will conduct a public health investigation in the event an employee or volunteer is confirmed to have COVID-19 while at work during the time they were infectious.

13 In BC, employers should ensure supervisors have been trained on monitoring workers and workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.

14 A self-assessment tool is available at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>.

15 A self-assessment tool is available at <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/COVID19>.

16 A self-assessment tool is available at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>.

17 A self-assessment tool is available at <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
Conduct hazard assessments to identify existing and potential hazards related to COVID-19. Where elimination of these hazards is not possible or reasonable, they must be controlled.			✓		✓	✓	✓ ¹⁸	✓	
Post signs indicating that no customer packaging is to be used or placed on checkout counters; and to minimize touching merchandise.			✓						
Prepare plans in place for increased worker absences due to illness or isolation.			✓						
Ensure sick leave policies are flexible and employees are aware of these policies.		✓	✓						
Examine sick-leave policies to ensure they align with public health guidance.							✓	✓	
Encourage staff and volunteers to remain up to date with developments related to COVID-19.							✓		
Be aware of workers' concerns and develop communications plans for answering workers' concerns.		✓				✓		✓ ¹⁹	
Remind employees about available health and social supports during this stressful time and encourage them to use these resources.		✓ ²⁰					✓	✓	
Do not require a doctor's note for employees who are sick		✓					✓		
Exercise greater accommodation for higher-risk populations including those 65+ in terms of work space, more flexible hours of work or shopping (earlier, later, mid-day) or working at home options.		✓					✓	✓	
To enable quick contact with employees, employers should maintain an up-to-date contact list for all workers and volunteers, including names, addresses and phone numbers.							✓		
Ensure workers have a health and safety contact person available for every shift (joint occupational safety and health committee member, representative, or otherwise) to support that protocols are being followed and understood.								✓	
Sanitation									
Sanitize the workplace thoroughly and often, especially frequently touched surfaces and common areas, such as door handles, entryways, elevators, washrooms, and kitchens. ²¹	✓	✓	✓ ²²	✓	✓ ²³	✓	✓	✓	✓

¹⁸ When hazards related to COVID-19 cannot be completely eliminated, the following hierarchy of controls are required: (1) Engineering controls (These control the hazard at the source. Examples include placing barriers or partitions between staff and the hazard, or ventilation); (2) Administrative Controls (These controls change the way workers, volunteer and patrons interact. Examples include policies for physical distancing, limiting hours of operations and respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.); and (3) PPE (PPE is generally only necessary when hazards related to COVID-19 cannot be completely eliminated by administrative and engineering controls. Personal Protective Equipment controls the hazard at the worker, volunteer or patron level. Examples of PPE include gloves, eye protection, face protections and masks.)

¹⁹ In BC, this is only a requirement for employers with fewer than 9 employees.

²⁰ In Manitoba, supports are available at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/bewell/index.html>.

²¹ Alberta recommends using a "wipe-twice" method to clean and disinfect. Wipe surfaces with a cleaning agent to clean off soil and wipe again with a disinfectant.

²² In Saskatchewan, if bulk sales areas are being used (i.e. small accessories), ensure areas are cleaned and disinfected between uses or have staff dispense the items.

²³ In New Brunswick, common areas must be disinfected twice daily, or more as required (i.e. if soiled); Employers should have a dedicated team member to ensure daily, adequate cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces; Quebec specifies that sanitary facilities must be cleaned at least every shift and disinfected daily, and eating areas must be cleaned after each meal and disinfected daily using appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
Provide resources to promote personal hygiene, such as hot/cold potable running water, liquid soap, paper towel, and garbage bins, for handwashing; or minimum 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer; toilet paper, cleaning and disinfecting supplies and personal protection equipment (PPE) (non-medical masks and disposable gloves) as appropriate.	✓	✓	✓ ²⁴	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide handwash stations.				✓	✓			✓	
Post handwash signs.					✓		✓		
Provide hand sanitizer for visitors to use upon entry.	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Avoid shared equipment; disinfect equipment.		✓	✓ ²⁵	✓ ²⁶		✓			
Have all employees frequently wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (greater than 60% alcohol content) if soap and water are not available.	✓ ²⁷		✓ ²⁸	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sanitize surfaces and immediate area between each transaction.	✓								
Provide sanitizing wipes to use on shopping carts and hand basket handles.	✓		✓						
Provide a safe place for customers to dispose of used sanitizing wipes.	✓		✓						
Limit the exchange of papers (e.g. signing contracts). If documents must be exchanged, leave them on a clean surface while maintaining a two-metre distance.			✓	✓					✓
Limit the number of incoming deliveries to those that are deemed essential.		✓							
Remove non-essential items (magazines, newspapers and trinkets) from common areas.		✓				✓	✓	✓	
Clothing and fabric items should be laundered and dried on the highest temperature setting possible. Ensure items are thoroughly dried.			✓						
Ensure that respiratory etiquette (e.g. Coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, promptly disposing of used tissues in the trash) is followed, and signs are posted to remind staff of these practices.		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Encourage staff to launder uniforms between shifts.							✓		
Physical Distancing									
Maintain physical distancing (staying 2 metres away from others).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ²⁹	✓	✓

²⁴ In Saskatchewan, employees should also be provided with no-touch trash receptacles.

²⁵ In Saskatchewan, equipment should be disinfected after each use; in Quebec, equipment should be disinfected after each shift or when equipment must be shared.

²⁶ In PEI, equipment, instruments, and tools that cannot be disinfected between clients should not be re-used.

²⁷ Ontario specifies that hand washing should be conducted before entering the workplace, after contact with others, or with surfaces others have touched. Employers should consider providing cashiers, drive-through operators, delivery staff and other customer-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only.

²⁸ In Saskatchewan and Alberta, hand sanitizer should be approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number).

²⁹ In Alberta, for the purposes of tracing close contacts, employers should be able to indicate (a) roles and positions of persons working in the workplace; (b) who was working onsite at any given time, who an employee may have worked with on any given shift. If a workplace has patrons within 2 metres of employees, then lists of patrons by time and date should also be kept.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
Control how many customers can enter the store at one time.	✓	✓	✓ ³⁰	✓	✓ ³¹	✓	✓	✓ ³²	✓ ³³
Maintain a single point of entry.		✓				✓ ³⁴	✓		
Manage traffic flow with floor markings and barriers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Make announcements at regular intervals over the store speaker reminding customers to stay two metres apart.			✓						
Assign staff to ensure customers are following physical distancing protocols in areas likely to be congested.	✓								
Use cashless payment methods when possible.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Do not accept re-usable bags or containers that are to be handled by your staff; provide clean carry-out bags for purchased goods.	✓		✓ ³⁵						
Install barrier between cashier and customer; this can include plexi-glass or marking.	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Limit the number of people working in one space (this may include, staggering shifts and breaks, or closing off areas to prevent large gatherings).	✓ ³⁶					✓	✓	✓	✓
Consider keeping regular work groups together to minimize the number of workplace contacts.		✓						✓	
Improve fresh air circulation/ventilation.	✓	✓				✓			
Do not allow individuals to congregate in groups in the retail establishment.		✓ ³⁷			✓				
Reschedule unnecessary visits to the workplace by supply chain partners, vendors, delivery people or others who don't need to be there now.	✓			✓					
Limiting hours of operation or setting specific hours for at-risk patrons.							✓		
Consider personal if required protective equipment (PPE) (accompanied by PPE training).	✓	✓	✓ ³⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓ ³⁹		
Encourage patrons to exit the business as quickly as possible following their purchase or completion of their visit.							✓		
Designate lockers and storage spaces to individual workers.							✓		

³⁰ In Saskatchewan, clear signs should be posted in multiple locations that indicate the maximum number of customers and staff allowed in the store at one time.

³¹ New Brunswick employers should have a dedicated team member to regulate entry into buildings and public spaces to prevent congestion.

³² Strategies to control the density of customers include: increasing throughput of customers by maintaining a high number of check-outs; increasing hours of shopping to decrease density of customers; encourage or require utilization of basic non-medical masks to reduce the spread through individuals coughing, sneezing, or close interpersonal contact; manage or eliminate waiting areas; increased use of appointments or bookings; increased on-line shopping/deliveries and/or pickups; use of physical barriers such as plexi-glass.

³³ Small retailers should restrict the number of customers to less than 10 at a time.

³⁴ In Quebec, this point of entry must be accessible from the outside work (i.e. stores located in shopping malls will not be permitted to reopen).

³⁵ In Saskatchewan, customers may use their own reusable bags, but should be encouraged not to.

³⁶ Any meetings should be held outside or in a large space.

³⁷ Manitoba permits up to 10 people to gather in common areas.

³⁸ In Saskatchewan, glove use is not required. If staff are using gloves, they should be changed after every interaction and when changing tasks. Non-PPE controls should be put into place by employers as often as possible.

³⁹ In Alberta, PPE must be maintained in good condition so it can perform its intended function to protect staff and volunteers, and the business owner should ensure that the PPE fits the workers and volunteers effectively. PPE that cannot be cleaned and disinfected should be disposed of after use. Reusable PPE must be clearly labelled with its assigned user's name and be stored separately from other PPE. Workplaces should keep and monitor an inventory of personal protective equipment to ensure that workers always have access to appropriate protective equipment if required. Staff should be allowed to wear masks if preferred, even if a mask is not necessary for the work they are performing.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
Retail-Specific Requirements									
Limit operations to 50% capacity, or one person per 10 square metres, whichever is lower.		✓							
Establish an occupancy limit that provides at least 5 square metres of unencumbered floor space per person (workers and customers). This limit should be posted at the entrance of the store.								✓	
Close public-use items, such as water fountains, onsite snack bars, coffee bars and other confectionery style counters.		✓							
Changerooms: Cannot be used				✓					
Changerooms: Use should be discouraged. If used, surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Only 50% of changerooms can be used.			✓						
Changerooms: Surfaces in change rooms should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.							✓ ⁴⁰		
Changerooms: Remove unnecessary or decorative objects from inside of changerooms. Refrain from handing out tokens or placards to customers with the number or items to try on. Consider other options, such as writing the number of items on a whiteboard on the door.								✓	
Changerooms should be separated by barriers, limiting the risk of transmission between rooms. Employers may consider closing every other fitting room to reduce the overall number of people in the changing area.								✓	
Ask customers to leave unwanted items in a designated location, including hangers.								✓	
Return policies: Update return policies to minimize risk of transmission of COVID-19 to workers, volunteers and patrons. If returns accepted, thoroughly clean and disinfect merchandise.			✓ ⁴¹				✓ ⁴²		
Place alcohol-based hand sanitizer in dispensers or soap and water hand washing stations near doors, pay stations, change rooms and other high-touch locations for customers and staff.			✓				✓	✓	
Develop strategies to minimize the handling of retail objects before purchase.			✓ ⁴³				✓ ⁴⁴		
Elevator cars must be limited to a maximum of 2 people at a time.					✓				
Retailers should speak with contractors about the importance of sick employees staying home.		✓							

⁴⁰ Customers should be encouraged to sanitize hands before trying on clothes.

⁴¹ Saskatchewan offers further guidance indicating that returned goods should be isolated in a separate bin (labelled with return date) for at least 72 hours before being returned to store shelves. Employees must wash their hands after handling.

⁴² This may include (a) eliminating the opportunity to return purchased goods (i.e. Final sale only) (b) cleaning and disinfecting hard-surfaced, returned good prior to placing them back onto the sales floor; and (c) storing soft-surface items for a period of 24 hours prior to resale.

⁴³ Signs should be posted requesting customers to only touch items they intend to buy. Where items are kept behind counters and provided to customers to try on and handle, such as jewelry and electronics, customers should clean their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada (DIN or NPN number) prior to handling the items. They should also avoid placing the items on or near their faces.

⁴⁴ This may include things like encouraging customers to sanitize hands before trying on clothes. Surfaces in changerooms should be cleaned and disinfected after use.

Reopening Guidelines	ON	MB	SK	PEI	NB	QC	AB	BC	NWT
Shopping baskets and carts should be disinfected between patron use.							✓		
Encourage curbside pickup for online purchases.							✓		
Encourage or require utilization of basic non-medical masks while shopping in the store to reduce the spread through individuals coughing, sneezing, or close interpersonal contact and therefore increase density.								✓	
Deliveries: Delivery drivers should be reminded to maintain their distance and not enter the warehouse unless necessary.								✓ ⁴⁵	
Consider stopping or reducing stock shelving and product display arrangements during the store operating hours. Where stocking or product display arrangements are needed during operating hours, define safe practices for workers. Workers should wash their hands before and after they are finished stocking or rearranging shelves or product displays.								✓	
If reusable bags are accepted at a retail store, the store should consider asking customers to pack the bags themselves.								✓	

⁴⁵ Employers should also communicate that a delivery has been made by phone call, text or email and avoid touching any surfaces, such as a doorbell. If possible, adjust practices for proof of delivery so that in-person signatures can be avoided and online confirmation of receipt of package can be used instead. Disinfecting wipes and alcohol-based hand sanitizers should be placed in delivery and dispatch vehicles. Clean and disinfect tools and frequently touched surfaces within the vehicle and between deliveries or installations. Delivery vehicles should be assigned to one worker only, if possible.

For further information about reopening guidance or other that may affect retailers upon reopening, please contact a member of Osler’s [Retail Group](#).