

## Retailers are Reinventing Holiday Shopping to Keep Communities Safe

With the holidays right around the corner, America's retailers are preparing for a shopping season unlike anything they, or their customers, have ever experienced. This year's holiday season comes at the end of an exhausting year for American families, but with countless communities experiencing a surge in coronavirus infections, retailers know we must remain vigilant, and take every precaution to keep our employees, customers, and communities safe.

Since the outset of the pandemic, retailers have relentlessly focused on shopping safe to ensure families have the goods and services they need. And while we all have high hopes for therapeutics to aid those infected with the virus, and ultimately a vaccine to prevent infection; America's retailers know that continuing to operate with rigorous safety protocols is the best way to stop the spread of the coronavirus and protect the communities in which we operate. That is why leading retailers voluntarily implemented mask requirements in their stores before many government orders were in place. They also revamped store operations, invested billions in additional training, improved cleaning procedures, added personal protective equipment, adopted safety protocols, and transformed their operating models to reduce crowding in stores.

This holiday shopping season, retailers are providing more ways to shop, and creating a longer, socially-distant sales period which is already underway. You won't see doorbusters or special deals that encourage crowds typical of past holiday seasons. Instead, retailers are:

- Spreading out promotions and discounts and making them available in-store and online;
- Expanding e-commerce and delivery options;
- Standing up curbside pick-up and other contactless shopping options; and
- Installing physical barriers at points of sale and sanitation stations.

Over the past seven months, America's retailers have demonstrated their commitment to the health and safety of their communities and have proven they can remain open and safely serve the public this holiday season. Regardless of what they sell, retailers have earned the confidence of customers and regulators alike by putting safety first. While no business can completely eliminate risk, we are confident the measures retailers continue to implement greatly minimize the possibility of COVID-19 spread and are the right approach for the country until there is widespread immunity from the virus.

In addition to keeping stores safe, retailers stand ready to assist in any way we can to help local communities. Many retailers have stepped up during this global health crisis to assist with drive-through COVID-19 testing sites on their store properties, utilizing parking lots and partnering with state and local governments to expedite testing. Retailers are also at the forefront of helping the government distribute a coronavirus vaccine to long-term care facilities like nursing homes, so that our most vulnerable populations remain safe and healthy.

One important safety measure that needs the continued support of government leaders is a clear expectation that everyone wears a mask in public spaces. The public and personal benefit of wearing a mask is abundantly clear and supported by data. Treating each other with respect and looking out for each other's health and safety is an American value, one that we should celebrate this holiday season.

As an industry, retailers stand ready to assist all elected officials with the important task of keeping all our Main Streets and storefronts open this holiday season. And as we work together to protect communities from the spread of COVID-19, we urge government actions to focus on safe retailing protocols, rather than outdated designations based upon what a retailer sells. We strongly believe the extraordinary steps local businesses have taken will help keep their communities safe. We invite you to reach out to retail leaders to review proposed policies that would impact retailers and consumers. We want to be part of the solution.

The retail industry greatly appreciates your continued partnership, and we are committed to working with you to help all communities celebrate responsibly, protecting lives and livelihoods. The upcoming holidays present an opportunity for all Americans to celebrate faith, family, and community, and to put a difficult year behind us by focusing on our shared values and an optimism that brighter days are ahead.