

A hand with red nail polish holds a black smartphone over a white payment terminal. In the background, a white bowl contains several chocolate chip cookies. The entire scene is partially covered by a semi-transparent teal rectangle on the left side, which contains the title and subtitle text.

COVID-19 Response Planning

Playbook on Employee Wellbeing for RCC Members

MAY 2020

RCC RETAIL
COUNCIL
OF CANADA

Context for this document

The following document has been prepared to provide members of the Retail Council of Canada a perspective on global best practices from retailers around the world on operating their business during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have compiled these materials through a scan of practices observed from companies in countries that have started to emerge from the government imposed restrictions on the essential, non-essential and restaurant sectors.

These materials are intended to provide you with a framework for key considerations and relevant global best practices as you operate your business in today's challenging environment.

These are not intended to be legal advice or to replace local health and government guidelines. The COVID-19 crisis is rapidly evolving and there are different considerations for retailers in different regions and sub-sectors of the retail industry. Readers should consult the applicable laws & regulations, and guidelines issued by federal & provincial health and labor authorities, to make the best decisions for their respective businesses.

Where feasible, sources & links have been provided & identified but, given the rapidly changing environment, sources are not possible for all statements. Members should perform their own research before executing any measures herein.

This is a non-exhaustive document and the Retail Council of Canada is keen to solicit your feedback on additional topics that may be relevant for your business for future iterations of this playbook.

What this document is

Framework of key issues to consider as retailers prepare to operate within the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic environment

Examples of practices observed from retailers across various sub-sectors around the world

Key issues to consider in implementing examples from other regions/countries and sectors

What this document is not

Exhaustive list of all issues that retailers may face in the current environment

Legal advice on practices businesses should follow. Please consult appropriate legal channels, Health Canada or other RCC resources on appropriate guidelines

Tactical advice on how to implement each potential action. Local realities in each region will dictate what is actionable

Playbook for retail re-entry: Employee wellbeing

Note: This is 1 of 6 Chapters produced by the RCC to support members in COVID response planning



Customer health & safety

Ensure customers are & feel safe while shopping

- Customer screening
- Social distancing
- Checkout & payment
- Store cleanliness

Focus of this document



Employee wellbeing

Keep employees safe & healthy

- Protective equipment
- Confirmed case response
- Employee testing



Retail operations

Continue to deliver product & operate stores

- Supply chain mgmt.
- Inventory mgmt.
- Labour planning & store hours



Merchandising & marketing

Provide relevant offering, given new context

- Product offering & asst.
- Pricing/promo/markdown
- Advertising & comms



Omnichannel

Adjust to new demand & operating needs

- Online fulfillment
- Delivery policies & options
- Trials & returns management



Finances

Maintain balance sheet to fund operations

- Cash & liquidity mgmt.
- Rent renegotiations



Employee Wellbeing: Three key priorities for retailers



1. Safety procedures & protective equipment

- Provide preventative and protective equipment to create a safe workplace

Create a
safe physical
environment



2. Supporting employees through the pandemic

- Assist employees through flexibility and support programs (financial and otherwise)

Establish
trust &
support
employees



3. Confirmed case response

- Re-assure staff & customers with clear, credible communications



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Safety procedures & protective equipment: Eight practices leading global retailers are considering in response to COVID-19

		Applicable to:		
		Essential	Non - essential	Restaurant
Reduce risk	1	Implement proactive temperature/wellness checks prior to shifts		
	2	Install physical barriers to protect employees (plexiglass shields, serving tables)		
Provide infrastructure & equipment	3	Provide store employees with protective equipment (masks, gloves, hand sanitizer)		
	4	Provide front-line staff with additional cleaning materials for workstations		
	5	Change back-of-house layout to create social distance		
Institute new training & policies	6	Update safety policies (e.g. handwashing, staggered breaks)		
	7	Train employees on new safety measures		
	8	Hire/re-deploy capacity to ensure safety procedures completed		



Proactive temperature/wellness checks of staff

Context & rationale:

- One of the primary causes of the spread of COVID-19 is through close contact with infected individuals; many infected individuals are asymptomatic, i.e., show no symptoms and yet are able to transmit the virus to others ([Link](#))
- Proactive checks on employees can help to detect the virus early and may lead to employees staying home when feeling unwell

Examples:

- **Walmart and Amazon (US):** Taking temperatures of Associates as they report to work; Walmart is also asking basic health screening questions - Associates with high temperatures cannot work until no fever is detected for 3 days ([Link](#); [Link](#))
- **McDonald's (US):** Rolling out wellness checks to >800,000 workers and is planning to start taking temperatures amid the coronavirus outbreak ([Link](#))
- **Chipotle (US):** Conducting wellness checks to confirm health of each employee, before entering kitchens ([Link](#))
- **Starbucks (Canada):** Taking employees' temperatures and requesting use of the "COVID-19 Virtual Coach" to determine if fit to come to work (likely leverages screening questions, such as those available on public health websites) ([Link](#))
- **Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan:** Majority of establishments are taking temperature of both customers and employees prior to entry

Execution considerations:

- Encourage employees to use existing health check sites/apps before coming to work (most provincial health authorities have triage websites)
- Establish culture of self-reporting & abundance of caution; interrelated with other staff-support measures such as sick pay
- We are hearing that given the high demand for thermometers globally, it is increasingly difficult to source bulk quantities at this time

McDonald's (Beijing): Sign-in and temperature screening station



McDonald's (Hong Kong):
Thermal monitor



Physical barriers - plexiglass shields (retail)

Context & rationale:

- Retail front-line workers such as cashiers are often required to work in close proximity to customers and see many customers during a short period of time
- It is often difficult to maintain social distancing (i.e. 1-2m distance) for these front-line workers, putting them at higher risk of contracting the virus from an infected customer
- Plexiglass barriers help shield employees & customers from fluids/droplets from the other party

Examples:

- **Kroger (US):** Installed 1m² Plexiglas protective barriers for cashiers ([Link](#))
- **Walmart, Sobeys, Loblaws (Canada):** Installed plexiglass shields ([Link](#); [Link](#))

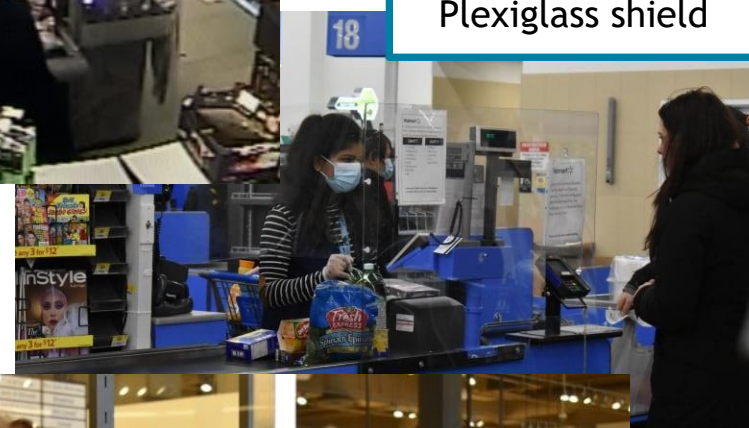
Execution considerations:

- Consider putting plexiglass shields at check-outs and cash registers at the store
- Where it is not feasible to put shields, consider providing PPE to employees
- Irrespective of shields, best practice is for employees to wear gloves when handing product
- Installation and material costs should be considered - observed options range from more temporary solutions to professionally installed fixtures
- Different configurations needed based on layout of checkout deck and point-of-sale system, etc.
- Ensure regular cleaning of shields should in standard protocols for high frequency cleaning/sanitization

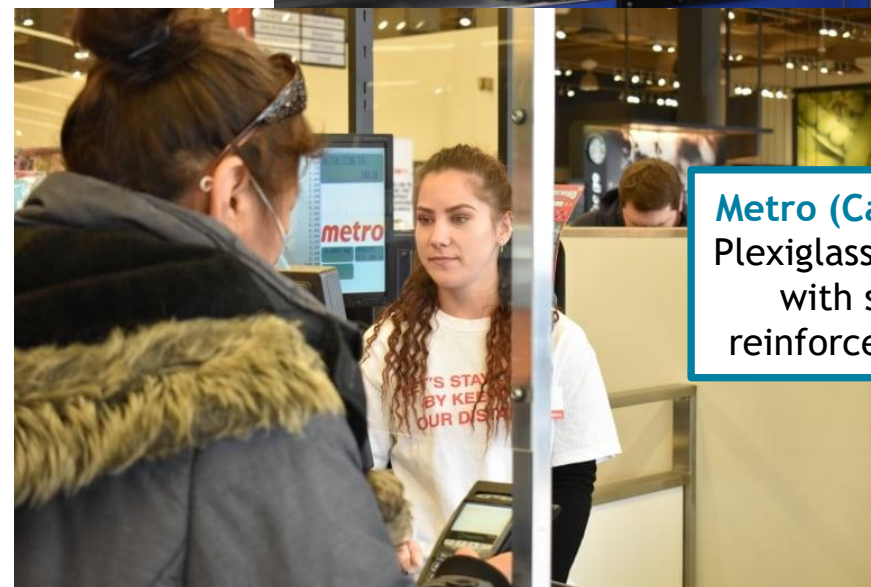
SPAR (Europe):
Plastic barrier



Walmart (Canada):
Plexiglass shield



Metro (Canada):
Plexiglass shield,
with side
reinforcements





Physical barriers - serving side-tables & barriers (restaurants)

Context & rationale:

- Restaurants face unique difficulties with social distancing and protecting staff - due to popularity of open-concept designs with few barriers between customers, and inherent characteristic of food-service in needing to closely approach tables to deliver food
- Two emerging best practices: install barriers between tables, and where possible use temporary side tables to serve food vs. putting food directly on customers' table

Examples:

- **Yardbird (Hong Kong):** Installed barriers between open-concept booths

Execution considerations:

- If used, serving side-tables should be mobile - allowing waiters to place food on the cart, and then customers would transfer the food to their own table
- Evaluate restaurant space to determine whether barriers are needed; in restaurants with mobile seating, better option may be to move tables apart

Yardbird (Hong Kong):
Plastic barriers
separating booths





Personal protective equipment for employees

Context & rationale:

- Wearing PPE reduces the risk of transmission by limiting direct contact with surfaces within a store
- Masks help prevent the spread of fluids/droplets from the wearer to others; thereby limiting healthy people from contracting any fluids from the wearer ([Link](#))

Examples:

- **Dia (Spain):** Providing store and warehouse employees with hand sanitizer and gloves ([Link](#))
- **Wegmans (US):** Announced that it has secured enough masks for all of its employees to wear while at work ([Link](#))
- **Kroger (US):** Providing masks to store associates - and is requiring all employees wear them ([Link](#))
- **Walmart (US):** Requiring that associates wear "masks or other face coverings" at work, including in stores, distribution centers, and corporate offices; employees can bring their own mask, or they are provided with one ([Link](#))
- Waiters in **Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan** are wearing masks

Execution considerations:

- Best practice is to provide masks to employees at the workplace - N95 and surgical masks are recommended by the FDA in the US ([Link](#))
- However, procuring medical-grade masks is proving difficult - with strains on supply chains and given additional demand from the government ([Link](#))
- As a fall-back, encourage employees to wear their own masks, if possible, and provide guidance on cleaning masks (generally in a washing machine for cloth masks)

CDC (US): Guidance for wearing masks ([Link](#))

Should cloth face coverings be washed or otherwise cleaned regularly? How regularly?

Yes. They should be routinely washed depending on the frequency of use.

How does one safely sterilize/clean a cloth face covering?

A washing machine should suffice in properly washing a face covering.

How does one safely remove a used cloth face covering?



Din Tai Fung (Hong Kong): ([Link](#))



Provide additional workstation cleaning materials

Context & rationale:

- Employee work areas are amongst the highest-touch areas within retail/restaurant environments (e.g. checkout lanes, host desks)
- Given rotating nature of shift work, frequent cleaning provides employees reassurance and a sense of control over their workspace

Examples:

- **M&S (UK):** Store and supply-chain colleagues provided with additional hygiene products ([Link](#))
- **Lowe's (US):** Cashiers and front-end teams provided with cleaning supplies to clean work areas and registers after each customer interaction ([Link](#))
- **Airport (Hong Kong):** Novel approaches are being tested, including full-body disinfection booths and antimicrobial coating for high-touch passenger areas such as handles, seats, check in kiosks to supplement ongoing cleaning ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Where possible, default to smaller sizes (and more units) of cleaning supplies to enable each employee to keep a set at their workstation (particularly for non-essential and essential retail checkout areas)
- Set clear expectations, ideally via scheduling, for cleaning cadence and accountability (e.g., checkout lanes close every 30 minutes for cleaning by cashiers in two rotating shifts, restaurant tables cleaned after each customer by hostess, etc.)
- For restaurants, create checklist of back-of-house cleaning responsibilities as well, including communal tools in kitchens, countertops, burner controls, etc.

Kroger (US): New cleaning procedures

Step Up Cleaning Procedures

Maintaining a clean work environment will help control the exposure and spread of COVID-19. Consider how these practices can help keep your business sanitized and clean:

- Enhance your daily sanitation practices, including registers, hand-held devices, credit card terminals, food service counters, door handles, conveyor belts, restrooms, shelves and other surfaces.
- Assign dedicated employee to wipe down carts with sanitizer and paper towels in the lobby during store hours.
- Assign extra staff to allow for frequent hand-washing rotation for front-end employees.
- Clean and stock bathrooms more frequently.
- Instruct employees to wipe down equipment, including pallet jacks, ladders and supply carts, between every use.
- Procure options for third-party cleaning companies to assist with the increased cleaning demand as needed.

Consider this...

- Are extra staff or outside vendors needed to meet the new cleaning demands?
- What steps can you take now to procure supplies, including masks, wipes, sanitizer and cleaning supplies?



Grocer (Canada): Checkout cleaning

Starbucks (US): Cleaning procedures announced





Change back-of-house layout & operations

Context & rationale:

- Some environments, such as fast food and restaurant kitchens, have traditionally operated with close physical proximity and interaction between employees
- A number of levers can help to create additional distance, including simplifying menu items (fewer ingredients and steps), reducing staff in kitchen, assigning clear tasks in a set space (vs. movement throughout prep process), and actively leveraging countertops, tables etc. to move food around a kitchen

Examples:

- While few restaurants have released in-depth outlines of back-of-house procedures, examples from volunteer kitchens provide interim example

Execution considerations:

- Mandate the use of PPE and constant cleaning in environments where social distancing is difficult to maintain such as kitchens and back-of-house environments
- Consider changing tasks such that employees stay in limited parts of the back-of-house vs. moving about
- Use counter space and tables to pass food between stations, vs. having an employee carry it
- Limit the number of staff in the kitchen and consider limiting the menu so as to require fewer employees at a time to allow for social distancing. Restaurants will have to consider implications to demand and margins with smaller menus
- Note: Simplifying offerings & menu items will be discussed in more detail in Merchandising & Marketing playbook.

Non-profit (Ireland): Social distancing in kitchen





Update safety policies—e.g., scheduled handwashing, staggered breaks

Context & rationale:

- New practices, such as social distancing and enhanced hygiene, will be most effectively implemented if reinforced in work policies & procedures
- Given new guidelines from various govt. health bodies, important to change your employee procedures to ensure adherence
- CDC recommends handwashing as one of the most effective ways to remove germs and avoid the spread of illness ([Link](#))

Examples:

- **Chipotle (US):** Mandating handwashing every hour and between tasks; providing visual reminders of "Top 7 Food Safety Things to Remember" ([Link](#))
- **Seafood City (Canada):** Using codes over store intercom to remind employees to wash hands and change gloves on a regular cadence ([Link](#))
- **Sobeys (Canada):** Scheduling hand-washing for employees every 15 minutes ([Link](#))
- **Government of Ontario:** Recommends staggered employee breaks as one approach to enforce social distancing ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Frequency of handwashing needed will differ between retail segments (e.g., more frequent in grocery stores & restaurants; and potentially between each customer interaction in other retail sectors)
- Develop a schedule or other visual/auditory cues to remind staff of required handwashing frequency
- Post signage with proper handwashing techniques
- Restaurant should consider other procedures around cleaning menus and tables with disinfectants along with considerations for other retailers





Train employees on new safety measures

Context & rationale:

- Rollout of new safety measures are only effective if all staff are following the same standards - otherwise risk of contaminated areas/items in store can increase
- Given the amount of news and misinformation in the public domain, critical for retailers to ensure employees are provided training on best corporate policies to keep themselves, customers and the brand safe
- Communication also reassures staff in the retail environment

Examples:

- H-E-B (US):** Increased communication to employees about in-store safety measures ([Link](#))
- H-E-B (US):** Staff provided with up-to-date information daily and access to online advice from healthcare experts ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Support ongoing implementation of standards by setting up safety trainings with new and existing team members
- Leverage existing touchpoints with staff (e.g., team calls, emails, etc.) to share new practices, provide updates, and solicit feedback regarding implementation
- Trainings should be customized to role type and should cover the following, at the minimum: Cleaning procedures, hand washing, product/food handling, use of PPE, social distancing requirements, what to do if not feeling well, among others
- Restaurants, in particular, may require more change management than other retailers given need to space out back-of-house setup - pair behavioral training with social distancing reinforcements & product simplification (e.g. simplified recipes, discussed in Merchandising & Marketing playbook)

Promote Healthy Habits

As the crisis evolved, so did our methods. However, the safety of our employees and customers has remained the number one priority when making business decisions throughout the pandemic. This often meant being flexible to quickly adapt to new ways of working. At other times, it meant a refresher on the basics, including proper hand-washing techniques and other hygiene practices. You can follow the tips below to promote healthy habits in your facilities:

Educating Employees

We all know we should wash our hands often throughout the day. But it's important to provide quick reminders to employees to the CDC and communication to customers. Leaders should encourage employees to follow recommended hygiene practices.

- Also, don't underestimate the power of your external messages to reach your employees as well.

Consider this...

- What internal and external channels do you have to reach employees and customers?
- What tools do leaders need to reinforce these behaviors with their teams?

Kroger Sharing What We've Learned: A Blueprint for Businesses



Nothing herein constitutes legal advice or other formal direction or guidance of any kind. The information herein is offered for general informational purposes only.

5

Many governments offer guidelines for employee training

Summary of Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

BE HEALTHY, BE CLEAN

- Employees - Stay home or leave work if sick; consult doctor if sick, and contact supervisor.
- Employees - Instruct sick employees to stay home and send home immediately if sick.
- Employees - Pre-screen employees exposed to COVID-19 for temperature and other symptoms.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer per CDC.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wear mask/face covering per CDC & FDA.
- Never touch Ready-to-Eat foods with bare hands.
- Use single service gloves, dish tissue, or suitable utensils.
- Wrap food containers to prevent cross contamination.
- Follow 4 steps to food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

CLEAN & DISINFECT

- Disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently.
- Use EPA-registered disinfectant.
- Ensure food containers and utensils are cleaned and sanitized.
- Prepare and use sanitizers according to label instructions.
- Offer sanitizers and wipes to customers to clean grocery cart/basket handles, or utilize store personnel to conduct cleaning/sanitizing.

PICK-UP & DELIVERY

- If offering delivery options:
 - Ensure coolers and transport containers are cleaned and sanitized.
 - Maintain time and temperature controls.
 - Avoid cross contamination; for example, wrap food during transport.
- Encourage customers to use "no touch" deliveries.
- Notify customers as the delivery is arriving by text message or phone call.
- Establish designated pick-up zones for customers.
- Offer curbside pick-up.
- Practice social distancing by offering to place orders in vehicle trunk.

For more information, see [Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). April 2020



Hire/re-deploy capacity as needed to fulfill safety needs

Context & rationale:

- New operating procedures for COVID 19 increase the responsibilities for existing staff (e.g. higher cleaning requirements, triaging customers, managing line-ups, restocking etc.)
- Given the higher workload in the new environment, critical for retailers to consider the added burden on employees and re-allocate responsibilities
- Three options: Deprioritize other tasks, re-allocate employees or hire additional employees

Examples:

- **H-E-B (US):** Added an extra manager in charge of Covid-19 response who ensures store cleanliness (cleaning twice per day, food hygiene) and social distancing (monitors lines at food counters and checkout to ensure social distancing) ([Link](#))
- **Grocers (Canada & US):** Several grocery stores have hired additional security to manage line-ups at the door

Execution considerations:

- Best practice is to operate with slack in expected capacity ([Link](#))
- For essential retailers seeing a surge in customers, important to ensure they increase hiring to manage the higher demands on employees during the COVID-19 crises. Extra employees usually needed for stocking, crowd control at check-out and cleaning
- For non-essential retailers and restaurants, consider reallocating existing workers to different tasks to reduce the burden on employees
- Retailers consider the higher costs from new employees when considering which stores to open

Giant Eagle (US): Partnered with closed arena to hire displaced workers ([Link](#))



Grocer (Canada):
Security guard
managing line control



Employee Wellbeing: Three key priorities for retailers



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- Provide preventative and protective equipment to create a safe workplace

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2. Supporting employees through the pandemic

- Assist employees through flexibility and support programs (financial and otherwise)

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3. Confirmed case response

- Re-assure staff & customers with clear, credible communications



Additional employee support: Five practices leading global retailers are considering in response to COVID-19

		Applicable to:		
		Essential	Non - essential	Restaurant
Flexible policies during COVID	1	Increase employee pay – wage increases/cash bonuses		
	2	Pre-emptively expand sick leave, regardless of confirmed case status		
	3	Relax absenteeism policy for vulnerable workers (e.g., elderly workers)		
Demonstrate care	4	Support most financially vulnerable workers		
	5	Institute non-monetary support programs (e.g., additional breaks, free masks, etc.)		



Increase employee pay

Context & rationale:

- Given the additional stress and higher risk of transmission for front-line employees during the COVID-19 crises, 'pandemic pay' has been instituted as best practice by many employers to support employees ([Link](#))
- Additional pay and cash bonuses were prevalent among Canadian grocery stores in early phases of the COVID crisis to incentivize & reward
- Upon initial implementation, grocery stores indicated additional pay would be in place for approximately one month, then be re-assessed going forward

Examples:

- Walmart (US):** Setting aside \$550M in cash bonuses for hourly workers ([Link](#))
- Amazon (US):** Providing employees, both in-store and at fulfillment centers, double pay for every hour of over-time worked
- Sobeys, Metro, and Loblaws (Canada):** Increasing regular pay during COVID period (Loblaws by +15%) ([Link](#))
- Big Lots (US):** Increasing pay temporarily by \$2.00/hour all associates working in stores and distribution centres; temporarily improving the associate discount to -30% and a special discretionary pay-out for bonus-eligible leaders in stores ([Link](#))
- Ulta Beauty (US):** Paying bonuses to distribution center employees ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Ongoing implementation will hinge in part on staff willingness to work given COVID-19 risks
- Consider implementing other employee safety best practices in this playbook and other recommendations by govt. agencies to ensure employee safety
- If implementing, consider establishing a set timeframe for wage increase and re-assess on regular basis

Chipotle (US): Highlighting increased pay for staff, amongst other support ([Link](#))

CARE FOR OUR PEOPLE

EXPANDED EMERGENCY LEAVE AND SICK PAY
Individuals directly affected by COVID-19 may receive pay equal to their upcoming 2-week schedule or average hours worked.

24/7 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE EXPERTS
Every employee has access to medical experts via their mobile phone.

RESTAURANT BONUSES AND INCREASED PAY
In addition to issuing \$9M in discretionary bonuses to our restaurant teams, Chipotle increased hourly pay by 10% to help them and their families during this time.

Thank You Pay For All Crew Members: In recognition of the outstanding, inspiring work being done by our Crew Members, as they continue to take care of our customers and our communities, a \$2/hour additional "thank you" wage is being applied for every hour worked. Moreover, during this time, we have offered Crew Members a few additional ways to qualify for and maintain health insurance. We want Crew Members to have the opportunity to take extended time off without repercussions to their benefits.

Trader Joe's (US): Additional \$2/hour 'thank you' pay for crew members ([Link](#))



Pre-emptively expand sick leave allowances

Context & rationale:

- Given significant financial hardship driven by job losses and reduced hours, many employers have created policies to ensure that employees exercise an abundance of caution before deciding to come to work
- Paid sick leave, even before COVID-19 infection is confirmed, has been used by retailers globally to incentivize employees to take precautions and reduce risk of potential workplace spread

Examples:

- **Home Depot (US):** Hourly full-time associates receiving an additional 80 hours of paid sick leave or personal time until end of 2020; part-time hourly associates receiving an additional 40 hours of paid sick or personal time ([Link](#)); employees over age 65 receive extra paid time off ([Link](#))
- **Darden (Olive Garden, Longhorn, etc.) (US):** Offering paid sick leave for all 190k workers in addition to paid family and medical leave, healthcare plans, and a 401(k). Employees now qualify for one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked and will also be provided with two weeks pay under a new emergency pay program ([Link](#))
- **Apple (US):** Unlimited sick leave for all full-time and part-time hourly workers ([Link](#))
- **Lowe's (US):** Temporary time-off measures ([Link](#))
- **Best Buy (US):** Sick pay provided for employees who are sick and told to stay at home, anyone in quarantine, and employees who may need to stay home to care for their children ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Check recent government policies providing support for expanded sick leave

Darden restaurants (US):
Paid sick leave for all
hourly employees ([Link](#))



Trader Joe's (US):
Additional paid sick time
for all employees ([Link](#))



Relax absenteeism policy, especially for the most vulnerable

Context & rationale:

- During these unprecedented times, employers are supporting employees that face unique challenges which make it difficult to come to work even if they themselves are not infected
- Employees that are elderly and immunocompromised or those that live with or are care-takers for such individuals face higher risks from COVID-19. Other employees may have other physical or emotional challenges arising from the COVID-19 crises
- Globally, retailers are putting in place practices to ensure these employees are supported if they are not able to come to work

Examples:

- **Petco (US):** Waiving absentee policy and providing support to employees who decide to stay at home if uncomfortable working ([Link](#))
- **Starbucks (US):** Continuing to pay all employees catastrophe pay for the next month, even when they do not come in for shifts; workers who continue to come to work at the chain's open US locations will receive an extra \$3 an hour in "service pay" through April 19 ([Link](#))
- **Walgreen's (US):** Relaxing attendance policy for hourly team members until end of April, and confirmed cases are not required to use paid-time-off or vacation time ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Employers have set up communication channels to ask staff to reach out if they feel uncomfortable attending work
- Many retailers are keeping in close contact with at-risk employees to determine when they are ready to return to work



Cencosud (Chile): All employees >age 60 requested to remain at home for 2 weeks with pay ([Link](#))



Target (US): Waiving absence policy to care for dependents ([Link](#))



Support most financially vulnerable workers

Context & rationale:

- Many employees or their family members have lost their jobs temporarily or permanently as a result of COVID-19
- Many are facing dire financial distress owing to loss of income or the economic uncertainty from COVID-19

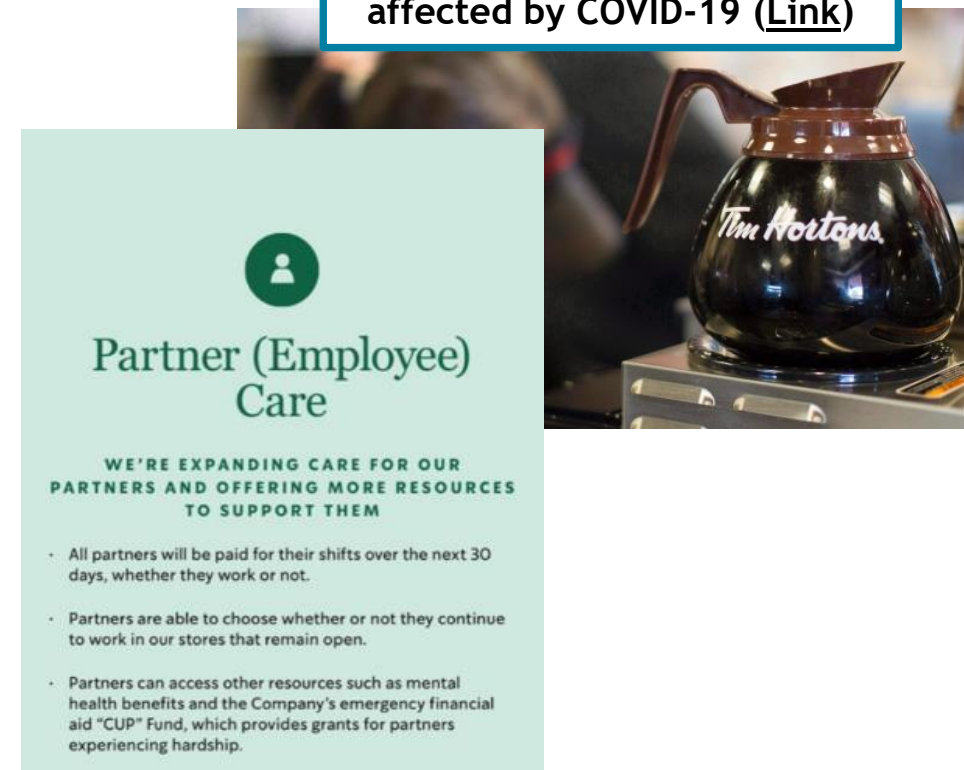
Examples:

- **Lowe's (Canada, US):** established a \$25 million fund to support employees, customers and communities ([Link](#))
- **Primark (UK):** created wage fund for garment workers ([Link](#))
- **John Lewis (UK):** established support fund to assist staff facing increased costs as a result of the pandemic ([Link](#))
- **Petco (US):** launched Petco Partner Assistance Fund, an employee relief fund ([Link](#))
- **Amazon (US):** established the Amazon Relief Fund, with \$25M to support employees under financial distress ([Link](#))
- **Postmates (US):** offering "fleet relief fund" to help couriers pay for the cost of medical check-ups ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Globally retailers are balancing the size of assistance with their own relative size, size of employee base, their own financial condition, etc.

Tim Hortons (Canada):
Provides \$40M fund for staff
affected by COVID-19 ([Link](#))



Starbucks (US): Highlights
grants for employees
experiencing financial hardship



Non-monetary support programs

Context & rationale:

- Many retailers are unable to financially support employees given their own financial distress caused by COVID-19
- Given the importance of supporting employees, many retailers are considering other non-monetary means to support their workers during these difficult times
- This has been particularly relevant for employers that have temporarily or permanently laid-off employees

Examples:

- **Kroger (US):** Establishing financial assistance, online health benefits, and well-being hotline for employees ([Link](#))
- **Albertsons Co (US):** Partnering with other major businesses to provide part time jobs to furloughed employees
- **Starbucks (US):** Providing free counseling and expanded child care program for employees in need due to school closures ([Link](#))
- **Lowe's (US):** Extending telemedicine benefit to all associates and their families (seasonal, temporary, part-time and full-time), regardless of enrolment in Lowe's medical plan ([Link](#))
- **John Lewis (UK):** Providing free meals to all staff during crisis ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Employers are providing scheduling and contractual flexibility for employees that may need to seek additional employment due to personal financial situation
- Some examples of employers collaborating with other businesses to support employees (e.g. helping in job searches)



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Confirmed case response: Five practices leading global retailers are considering in response to COVID-19

		Applicable to:		
		Essential	Non - essential	Restaurant
Prepare Care for the affected	1	Develop default response template and plan of action		
	2	Provide COVID-specific sick pay		
	3	Quarantine employees who came into contact with infected individual; provide support during time off as possible		
Manage transmission risk	4	Close store and deep-clean post-confirmed case		
	5	Implement contact-tracing where possible & contact affected individuals		



Develop response template & plan of action

Black Sheep (Hong Kong):
Restaurant playbook
provides response examples

Context & rationale:

- In the event of confirmed case, having a decisive & well-communicated response plan can demonstrate credibility & re-assure employees & customers of a safe eventual re-opening

Examples:

- Black Sheep:** Restaurant group has a detailed response plan to positive COVID cases ([Link](#))
- Amazon:** Used internal messaging system to inform employees of confirmed case in warehouse and released an email statement ([Link](#))
- Detailed protocols and response plans provided by industry publications ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Draft messages in advance—including clearly defined communication plan of action to employees
- Identify location in advance for temporary isolation of identified employee or customer, in the event they are unable to immediately leave the premises
- Four key steps in response plan: i. work with public health authorities, ii. deep cleaning, iii. immediate closure, and iv. transparency
- Include clear timelines for closure (i.e., 24-48 hours) and specific cleaning procedures
- Key to collaborate with public health authorities to investigate direct contacts, in order to support others who may need to self isolate

A GUEST VISITS WHO HAS COVID-19:

In these challenging times, we believe complete transparency is the only way forward and need to share that the Health Department has informed us that a guest that visited <restaurant> has tested positive for COVID-19. Our Guest Relations team is currently reaching out to everyone who has dined in the last <?> days to let them know they may have been exposed.

Out of an abundance of care, <restaurant> will remain closed until further notice and is being industrially sanitised, while all team members are self-isolating. We apologise to everyone who had upcoming reservations for the inconvenience, and we look forward to welcoming you back when we feel it is safe to do so.

A TEAM MEMBER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19:

We are heartbroken to announce that a team member from <restaurant> has tested positive for COVID-19. While right now we do not know for sure when he/she became infected, our Guest Relations team is currently reaching out to everyone who has dined in the last 14 days to let them know they may have come into contact with this <insert job function>. The restaurant is closed indefinitely for deep sanitisation and the full team is in self-isolation and being tested. At the moment no other team members are experiencing symptoms but as soon as we have more information, we will share it here.

In the meantime, if you have any queries please contact us via <insert email> and we will do our best to answer them. Our thoughts are with our teammate who is currently receiving care from some of the incredible healthcare workers our city is so fortunate to have. We wish everyone who has been directly affected by this devastating virus a speedy recovery and we look forward to happier times for all of us.



COVID-specific sick pay: Essential retailers enhanced leave policies and pay

Context

Given higher infection risk for employees working in public settings, some retailers have worked to provide additional sick leave



Retailer (US)	Additional paid time off (up to 2 weeks) under following conditions:	Bonuses/pay increases for frontline/hourly associates:
Kroger (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed symptoms by HC professional Anyone feeling unwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$300 FT/\$150 PT bonus (all frontline)
Best Buy (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary caregivers for children Associates whose shifts have been cut short 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.50/hr raise (voluntary workers)
Walmart (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed COVID cases Mandatory COVID quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$300 FT/\$150 PT bonus (all frontline) Reg. Q1 bonuses come early (in April vs. May) \$2/hr raise (fulfillment centers)
Walgreens (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed COVID cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$300 FT/\$150 PT bonus (all frontline)
CVS (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed COVID cases Mandatory COVID quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$150 to \$500 bonus (all frontline)
Target (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone ages 65+, pregnant and/or with underlying medical conditions Quarantined or confirmed illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2/hr raise (all frontline) \$250-\$1,500 bonuses (dept. supervisors)
Amazon (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed COVID cases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2/hr raise (all hourly) 2x overtime pay (prev. 1.5x)
Starbucks (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All associates paid for next 30 days (regardless of if they choose to work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3/hr raise (all hourly)
Lowes (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anyone feeling unwell or caring for loved ones Anyone affected by closed schools and daycares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2/hr raise (all hourly) \$300 FT / \$150 PT bonus
Home Depot (Link)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase PTO for all associates (+80 hours paid for FT, additional 240h if over 65) COVID-specific sick pay (<14 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100/week (FT), \$50/week (PT)



Quarantine employees who may have come in contact with confirmed case – and financially support them

Context & rationale:

- Employees who have come into contact with confirmed cases are at a high-risk of contracting COVID-19 even they are not yet demonstrating symptoms; close proximity to individuals with COVID-19 is one of the leading causes of transmission of the virus
- Employees who have come in contact with someone with COVID-19, but not yet showing symptoms, should not be permitted to return to work until the end of a 14 day quarantine period
- To align incentives and support the employees during this time, best practice is to continue providing pay during this period

Examples:

- **Walmart (US):** Providing 2 weeks' pay during quarantine period (including unconfirmed cases) ([Link](#))
- **Other retailers:** In case of a positive case in one location, re-opening store with staff from adjacent locations + temporary staff

Execution considerations:

- Plan for an alternative workforce in case employees need to be quarantined; this also emphasizes the usefulness of 'A/B' team model (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3)
- Determine the scope of employee quarantine needed, given context of other cleaning practices (e.g., customer during morning shift was confirmed positive, but all surfaces sanitized before afternoon shift)
- Given emerging knowledge of COVID-19, including its spread, follow Public Health authorities' advisories and current best practices



Close store and deep clean

Context & rationale:

- Confirmed cases create health concerns amongst customers and staff
- Retailers need to demonstrate clear safety protocols to re-open after closure
- Closure of establishment is important, beyond cleaning/disinfecting practices, as virus dies out on surfaces 1-3 days after initial exposure, depending on the material ([Link](#))

Examples:

- **Amazon (US):** Distribution center temporarily closed for deep-cleaning following a worker testing positive for COVID-19 ([Link](#)); prolonged closure of warehouse after several workers tested positive for the coronavirus ([Link](#))

Execution considerations:

- Keep small inventory of cleaning and disinfecting supplies for deep-cleaning such as: masks, gloves, disinfectants with Drug Identification Numbers, standard cleaning agents, mops/buckets/spray tools as needed
- Best practices include: opening doors/windows and using ventilating fans for air circulation, waiting ~24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection, cleaning followed by disinfecting of all areas potentially in contact with the ill individual (e.g., offices, bathrooms, shared areas, items, etc.)
- CDC provides specific guidelines for cleaning different surfaces ([Link](#))



Starbucks (US):
Deep cleaning after
confirmed COVID case



Grocer (Malaysia):
Deep cleaning after
confirmed COVID case



Implement contact-tracing

Context & rationale:

- Given asymptomatic nature of many COVID-19 cases, contact tracing is important to catch and isolate COVID-19 clusters before they can expand, particularly during re-entry scenarios

Examples:

- Sears (US):** Two store employees tested positive for COVID-19; store was closed and contact-tracing established to identify close-contact individuals and determine if quarantine/testing required ([Link](#))
- Black Sheep Restaurants (Hong Kong):** Playbook recommends restaurants create a Health Declaration form asking guests for contact details in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case ([Link](#))
- While currently unlikely to be implemented in North America, **Singapore's** government has developed an app ('Trace Together'), which users can download and opt-in to share phone location data and inform users of past proximity to COVID-positive patients ([Link](#)); **Israel** has implemented a similar app

Execution considerations:

- North American customers may be hesitant to provide personal data - if implementing a contact tracing system, consider making it optional, depending on initial reactions
- Mitigate sensitivity by providing clear rationale for collecting personal data and include a clear privacy policy
- Ensure that writing implements, keyboard, or tablet interface is sanitized after each use
- Be sure to record the date and time of visit for more accurate outreach, in the event of confirmed positive case

Black Sheep (Hong Kong):
Restaurant playbook
provides example contact
tracing form

<Restaurant name> <Today's Date>

HEALTH DECLARATION FORM

客人健康申报表

I hereby certify, represent and warrant as follows:
Within the fourteen (14) days immediately preceding the Date of this Health Declaration Form, **I HAVE NOT:**

- a. tested positive or presumptively positive with the Coronavirus or been identified as a potential carrier of the COVID-19 virus or similar communicable illness;
- b. experienced any symptoms commonly associated with the Coronavirus;
- c. been outside of Hong Kong;
- d. been in direct contact with or the immediate vicinity of any person I knew and/or now know to be carrying the Coronavirus or has travelled outside of Hong Kong within the last fourteen (14) days.

本人在此確認以下事項：
於填寫本健康申報表格之十四(14)天內**未曾有**：

- 甲、於新冠病毒測試中呈陽性反應或懷疑受感染。又或是被懷疑是新冠病毒以及其他可傳播性病毒的帶菌者；
- 乙、感到不適或有任何感染新冠病毒之病徵；
- 丙、離開香港或從外地進入香港；
- 丁、親身接觸過任何已感染新冠病毒之患者又或是於十四(14)天內有外遊記錄的人士。

Name (Print)	Phone No.	Email Address	Signature



Government resources for employers

In addition to the many best practices identified in this document, there are many federal and local government resources to assist employers and employees during these difficult times.

As the COVID-19 crises is constantly evolving, new programs are being introduced and older programs updated frequently.

Please refer to Government of Canada and your local provincial government websites for details on these programs as well the Retail Council of Canada website for details on these programs.

COVID-19 Disclaimer

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving, on a daily basis. Although we have taken great care prior to producing this presentation, it represents a view at a particular point in time. This presentation is not intended to: (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response. As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take, using this presentation as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.

A hand with red nail polish holds a black smartphone over a white payment terminal. In the background, a white plate holds several chocolate chip cookies. The scene is set on a grey countertop.

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