

Dealing with customers in the fight against COVID-19

Guide to the opening of businesses





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Purpose of this guide

According to experts, we will have to live with the COVID-19 virus for the foreseeable future. We therefore need to keep taking measures to prevent the further spread of the virus or new outbreaks as much as possible.

This guide sets out the necessary minimum preventive measures to ensure that contacts between retailers and self-employed traders with their customers are as safe as possible by minimising the risk of infection and avoiding contamination as much as possible.

These preventive measures may be supplemented at sectoral and/or company level to take the specific context into account as much as possible so that activities can be resumed in safe conditions. Other appropriate measures offering equivalent protection may also be taken.

This guide offers guidance to retailers and self-employed traders who have had to (partially) suspend their activities, in preparation for a safe resumption of their activities. Retailers who have not interrupted their activities and have already taken the necessary measures themselves may use this guide as a source of further inspiration.

In addition to the prevention measures in this guide, it is also advisable to consult the "[Generic guide to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at work](#)" of the Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue.

The content of this guide has been compiled from information from Comeos and the High Council for the Self-employed and SMEs, among others, and can be supplemented according to the guidelines of the National Security Council and on the basis of new scientific understanding and best practice.

Scope

- Retail activities (excluding catering)
- Other professions with and without physical contact
- Shopping centres
- Street trade (including markets)
- Self-employed professions in their own premises, at customers' home or on location



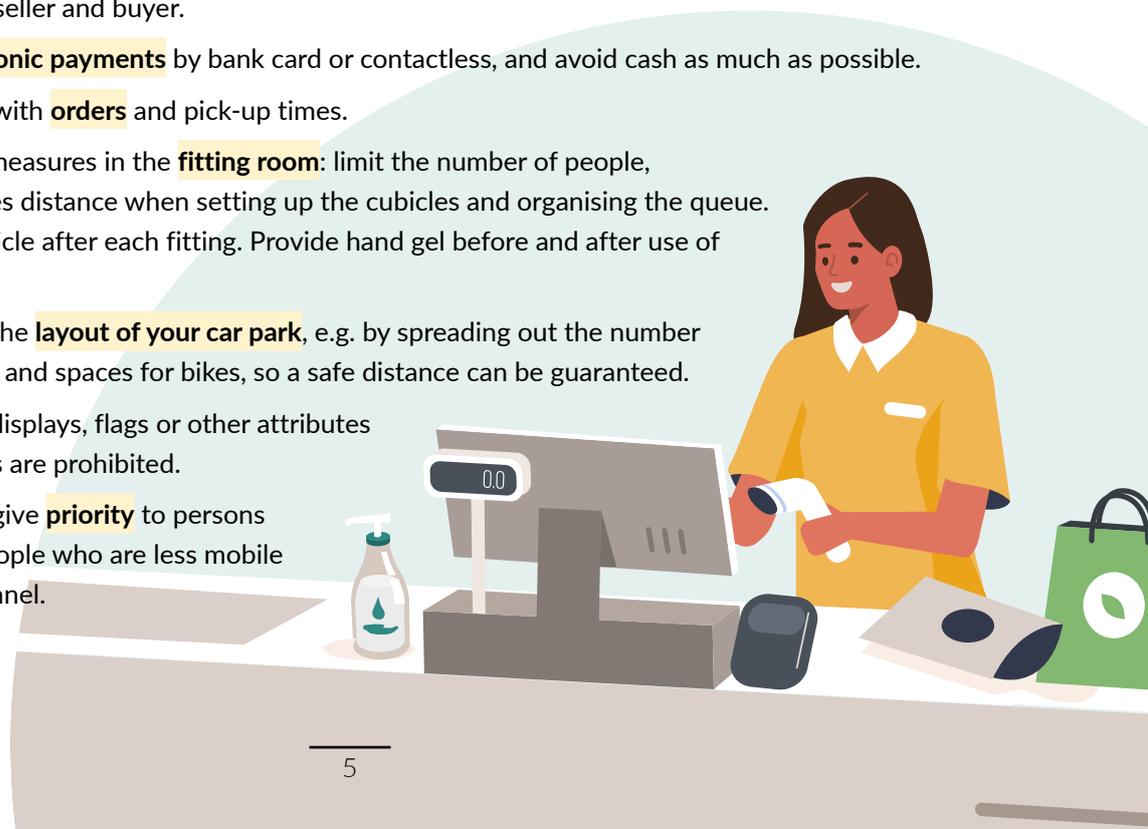
Guidelines for the **customer**



- **Do not go** to shops if you **show symptoms of disease**.
- Follow the **instructions** of the staff and the guidelines on display in the shop.
- It is recommended going to shops **near** where you live or work.
- Go to shops **alone**. An adult can accompany children under the age of 18 who live under the same roof or a person in need of an escort.
- Keep **1.5 metres away** from other customers and shop staff.
- Ensure good **hand hygiene**, and only touch the products you need.
- Do targeted shopping, no longer than necessary to make the purchase and for **no more than 30 minutes** in the same shop.
- It is strongly recommended that customers wear a **face mask** or a cloth alternative in the shop.
- **Pay** as much as possible **electronically** or contactless.
- It is advisable to give **priority** to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.
- **Gatherings** remain prohibited, even in shopping streets or shopping centres.

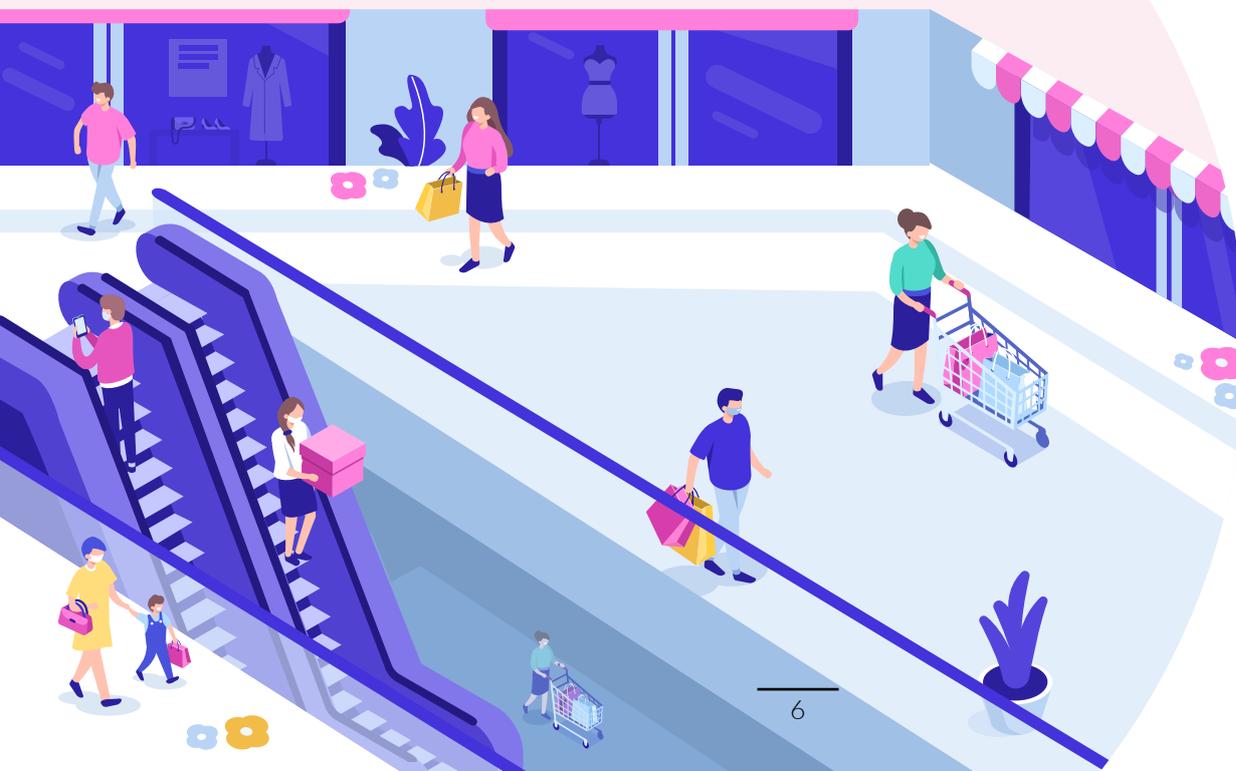
Guidelines for **retailers**

- **Display instructions visibly** outside and inside the shop, for example regarding the maximum number of customers who can enter the shop at the same time, or regarding the use of toilets. A template for a display and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy (bit.ly/GuideCommerces).
- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to **inform** them about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions: make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.
- Admit no more than **1 customer per 10 square meters** of accessible floor surface. However, if the floor surface accessible to customers is less than 20 square metres, no more than 2 customers can enter the premises, as long as a distance of 1.5 metres can be ensured between customers.
- Customers must be able to easily maintain a **distance of 1.5 metres** both inside and outside the premises. Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.
- For non-automatic doors, leave the **doors open** as much as possible.
- Ensure the necessary **hand hygiene** for staff and customers by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make these products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the shop (e.g. fitting rooms, ticket machines or payment terminal).
- Set up the **till area** so that a distance of 1.5 metres can be maintained between staff and customers, and between waiting customers in the queue. If this is not possible, provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.
- Ensure the shop is set up in such a way that the customer only touches the product he or she wants to buy. If this is not possible, **limit** as much as possible the **number of times the product is handled** by both seller and buyer.
- Encourage **electronic payments** by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.
- If possible, work with **orders** and pick-up times.
- Take preventive measures in the **fitting room**: limit the number of people, respect 1.5 metres distance when setting up the cubicles and organising the queue. Disinfect the cubicle after each fitting. Provide hand gel before and after use of the fitting room.
- Pay attention to the **layout of your car park**, e.g. by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes, so a safe distance can be guaranteed.
- **Street sales** and displays, flags or other attributes outside the shops are prohibited.
- It is advisable to give **priority** to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.



Guidelines for shopping centres

- **Display instructions visibly outside** the shopping centre, for example regarding the maximum number of customers who can enter the shop at the same time, or regarding the use of toilets. A template for a display and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy (bit.ly/GuideCommerces).
- Provide a **separate entrance and exit** for customers in the shopping centre.
- For non-automatic doors, leave the **doors open** as much as possible.
- Admit no more than **1 customer per 10 square meters** of accessible floor surface, for a period no longer than necessary and usual.
- Organise a system to check **how many customers are present** in the shopping centre.
- Customers must be able to easily maintain a **distance of 1.5 metres** both inside and outside the premises. Where possible, apply floor markings, ribbon barriers, physical barriers or a walking route to be followed.
- Ensure the necessary **hand hygiene** for staff and customers by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make these products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the establishment.
- If possible, give the necessary **instructions** to customers of the shopping centre via the public address system.
- The **guidelines** for retailers also apply to the **individual shops** in a shopping centre.
- Pay attention to the **layout of your car park**, e.g. by spreading out the number of parking spaces and spaces for bikes, so a safe distance can be guaranteed.
- **Street sales** and displays, flags or other attributes outside the shopping centres are prohibited.
- It is advisable to give **priority** to persons older than 65, people who are less mobile and caring personnel.



Guidelines in other sectors without physical contact



- Keep **1.5 metres distance**. Apply floor markings where possible.
- For non-automatic doors, leave the **doors open** as much as possible.
- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to **inform** them about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions: make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.
- Admit customers in **limited numbers**, and use alternatives for consultation and meetings, such as teleworking or digital meetings, as much as possible.
- **Work with appointments** and plan customer contact as spread out as possible. Avoid using waiting areas. If a waiting area is used anyway, organise the area with respect for the distance of 1.5 metres, and make sure that customers do not sit opposite each other. Position chairs with their backs to each other. Do not offer drinks to customers.
- If possible, admit customers in a **separate area** and limit the number of employees present.
- Reorganise the **reception area** so that the 1.5 metre distance between staff and customers can be maintained. If this is not possible, provide other safety measures, such as partitions and screens.
- Ensure the necessary **hand hygiene** for staff and customers by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Make these products available at the entry and exit and, where necessary, inside the establishment, e.g. when signing documents.
- In the case of customer contacts **outside the premises**: provide clear instructions for visits/work and ask timely for information about the location. Limit the number of employees/customers present in an area. If the presence of the resident is not required during the work, he or she must move to another area. Provide individual protective equipment.
- **Street sales** and displays, flags or other attributes outside the businesses are prohibited.

Guidelines for organising street trade

These guidelines apply to street trade, **including markets**.

Street activity refers to any sale, offer for sale or display with a view to the sale to consumers of products and ancillary services relating to those products by a trader outside the establishments mentioned in their registration in the Crossroads Bank for Enterprises or by a person who does not have such an establishment.

A market is regarded as a manifestation organized or previously authorized by the municipality, to bring together persons who sell products or services at fixed places and times.

These guidelines do not affect the powers of the local authorities to regulate street and fair activities in accordance with the law of 25 June 1993 on the exercise and organisation of street and fair activities. An ambulant activity may be performed in the usual place with the prior permission of the municipal government.

General guidelines for **street trading**:

- Ensure that a **distance of 1.5 metres** can be maintained at all times between visitors to the street business and the traders.
- Draft a **corona circulation plan** with clear demarcation of queueing line and walking route via ribbon barriers or crowd control barriers, and mark the queueing line every 1.5 metres.
- Ensure the necessary **hand hygiene** by providing means to disinfect hands with suitable hand gels or disinfectants. Install them in such a way that they are accessible to the seller and the customer.
- Display the **preventive measures** that apply to street businesses in a clearly **visible** place.
- Encourage **electronic payments** by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.
- Ensure the shop is set up in such a way that the customer only touches the product he or she wants to buy. If this is not possible, **limit the number of times the product is handled** by both seller and buyer as much as possible.



Additional guidelines for **markets**:

- Markets must be pre-approved by the **city council**, which must adapt all the guidelines below to the local situation.
- Only daily, weekly or fortnightly markets of **50 stalls or less** can be organized. An antique market or jumble sale is not allowed.
- Display the prevention measures that apply to the market **clearly visible** at all entrances to the market area.
- The rules of social distancing are adhered to. Customers, market vendors and their staff always keep **1.5 meters** away from each other.
- A one-way **circulation plan** is being developed, with separate entrances and exits to the market. Only in exceptional circumstances, a motivated deviation from this is possible by the local government, which will provide an alternative solution.
- Clearly separate the aisles and queues, using ribbons and crush barriers. Use ground **markings and/or signs** to ensure the distance of 1.5 meters.
- Means for the necessary **hand hygiene** should be made available at the entrance of the market and at every stall.
- The maximum amount of visitors admitted to the market is **1 visitor per 1.5 running meters** at a stall.
- A system is provided whereby it is possible to check **how many customers** are present on the market.
- Provide a **filter system** at the entrances to the market to limit the number of visitors.
- Set up **market stalls at a sufficient distance** from each other and ensure a sufficiently wide walk-through path.
- Market vendors and their staff must wear a **face mask**, or a cloth alternative.
- It is strongly recommended that market visitors also wear a **face mask** or a cloth alternative on the market.
- Food and drink **cannot** be consumed **on the spot** at the market. No food or drink is offered in the form of tastings for the customers.
- Groceries are done **alone** and do not take longer than usual and necessary. An adult can **accompany** children under the age of 18 living under the same roof or a person in need of guidance.
- The general guidelines for street trading also apply to the **individual market vendor** on the market.



Guidelines in sectors with physical contact



- Display instructions **visibly** inside and outside the establishment, a.o. regarding the maximum number of customers who can be inside at the same time, or regarding the use of toilets. A template for a display and a communication kit are available on the website of the FPS Economy (bit.ly/GuideCommerces).
- Duly contact your employees, including temporary workers and trainees, as well as external parties such as customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors, freelancers, visitors, parents and others who come into contact with the company, to **inform** them about the rules in your company. Many people will have specific questions: make it clear whom they can contact via info boards, intranet, website, etc.
- Customers are only received by **appointment**.
- Customers **wait outside** the establishment. They do not have access to waiting rooms and toilets (except in an emergency).
- Only **1 customer per 10 m²** of accessible floor space is received. However, if the floor area accessible to the customer is less than 20 square meters, more than one customer may enter the space, as long as a distance of 1.5 meters between customers can be guaranteed, with a maximum of 2 customers.
- **No drinks or food** is served.
- The application of social distancing, in particular the maintenance of a distance of **1.5 meters** between each person, must always be respected.
- There must be a minimum of 1.5 m meters between each **workstation**. As far as possible, each staff member works in the opposite direction.
- The work areas, work tools and equipment that comes into contact with the customer are **cleaned** after each service to a customer.
- The movements of the customers within the establishment are organized in such a way as to **minimize** any **contact** in all circumstances.
- No individual **fans** are used.
- Wearing a **face mask** or a cloth alternative within the establishment or on the place of the service is **mandatory for the staff** and for the **customer** from the age of 12. A customer may only take off the face mask for a facial treatment and only during the time that is strictly necessary for this treatment.
- Means for the necessary **hand hygiene** are made available at the entrance to and at various places within the establishment.
- The staff wash their **hands before** treating a new customer.
- Encourage **electronic payments** by bank card or contactless, and avoid cash as much as possible.
- **Street sales** and displays, flags or other attributes outside the businesses are prohibited.
- In principle, **hair salons** may only receive 1 customer per 10 m². However, it is possible to deviate from this rule provided that plexiglass protective screens are placed between the workstations and that the distance of 1.5 meters between the customers is ensured.
- For **home services**, the service provider may only be present at the place of service for the duration that is strictly necessary.

Communication material

The FPS Economy created a communication kit with posters, banners and pictograms for merchants, the self-employed, market vendors and municipalities.

You will find this communication material on bit.ly/covid19-commkit.