



ST. MARY'S COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Meenakshi G. Brewster, MD, MPH - Health Officer

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April 7, 2020

To: All St. Mary's County Retail Establishments

Re: Social Distancing Requirements - Governor Hogan's Executive Order 20-04-05-02

Dear Retail Establishment Manager/Operator:

During the COVID-19 pandemic and due to widespread community transmission in St. Mary's, it is critically important that our residents are able to maintain distance from one another and avoid potentially contaminated surfaces in order to protect others from transmission of the virus. The St. Mary's County Health Department has previously provided guidance for retail operations, including food service facilities. For this guidance and other resources for local businesses, please visit www.smchd.org/coronavirus and click on **Businesses+**.

I understand this public health emergency is an extraordinary strain, not just on our residents but also businesses throughout our county. Your efforts to provide essential services at this time of extreme stress while adjusting your business operations are much appreciated by our whole community. However, for the safety of our residents and your employees, **these services must be provided in compliance with orders and recommendations for social distancing.**

Unfortunately, some retail establishments may not be ensuring social distancing in their locations. If you have not done so already, please develop and implement a social distancing plan to protect your customers and employees immediately.

Our agency is working with local law enforcement to inspect retail establishments for compliance with social distancing practices. Should lack of social distancing be observed within your retail facilities due to a failure of adequate process and oversight, then your establishment may be deemed "unsafe" and will be issued an Order for Immediate Compliance. Violations of this order may lead to facility controls or closure as per Maryland Governor Hogan's [Executive Order 20-04-05-02](#).

More information about how to comply with social distancing in your retail establishments are available at www.smchd.org/coronavirus, as well as www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html. Some strategies include marking floors to ensure adequate distance between customers, limiting the number of people at one time in the facility, establishing zones within your facility that only allow a certain number of persons at a time, establishing customer flow patterns to avoid contact between your customers, and ensuring customers are not

congregating in lines within or outside the facility. These practices need monitoring and enforcement by your staff in order to ensure they are being implemented successfully. You are highly encouraged to increase your capacity for curbside pick-up and delivery. It is also imperative to disinfect surfaces that customers and employees regularly touch, including shopping carts, door handles, checkout areas, and other high-touch surfaces.

Additional practices intended to protect your employees and/or decrease the spread of disease to others include installing clear barrier shields between check-out customers and cashier clerks, ensuring your employees are wearing [cloth face coverings](#) as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and screening employees for symptoms and fever prior to each shift. Information on these strategies are also available at www.smchd.org/coronavirus -under the Businesses tab.

I know you and your teams are working hard to provide essential services under very difficult circumstances. Thank you for your efforts to protect and serve our community. Please review and implement additional measures to ensure social distancing so we can together slow the spread of this sickness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meenakshi G. Brewster', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Meenakshi G. Brewster, MD, MPH, FAAFP
St. Mary's County Health Officer