

**Protect Employees and  
Protect Customers:  
Gas, C-Store, and Repair  
Industry Best Practices  
for Stopping the Spread  
of COVID-19**



***A Guidance Document by NJGCA***

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## Summary

On March 9, 2020, Governor Murphy declared a State of Emergency and a Public Health Emergency, an unprecedented measure, to address the spread of the newly discovered COVID-19 outbreak throughout the state of New Jersey. A few weeks later, Governor Murphy declared a stay-at-home order, effectively shutting down the entire state. However, automotive repair shops, convenience stores, gas stations, and other businesses that the governor deemed essential to keep the state going could remain open and operating under certain conditions. Though our industries remained open to the motoring public, fears of catching the virus kept most of the state home.

Throughout this time, NJGCA has provided our members with information on how to promote social distancing while still in operation. Now that the governor has declared that the state can slowly begin to reopen, our industries need to prepare for more customers, while still safely following social distance protocols and keeping their businesses clean and sanitary. While guidebooks exist for many other industries in how to safely reopen, no such comprehensive guide exists for our industries which see hundreds of customers daily. We hope that you will use these best practices as a guide for your businesses to help stop the spread of the highly contagious Coronavirus and ease customers fears about returning to normalcy.

## General:

- Advertise and show off the effort you're putting into keeping everyone safe. Make sure customers can see you sanitizing and cleaning constantly, they WILL talk about it.
  - Use signs or other marketing tools to notify customers of your efforts. Keep a log on a clipboard conspicuously displayed that records each time a cleaning has taken place. Display the interval and schedule for cleaning, and list the areas to be cleaned. This will help make customers feel more comfortable and will be more likely to return.
- Provide easy access to sanitizing methods for employees and for customers. Hand sanitizer should be at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should be available immediately upon entering your facility and also conveniently located in other areas where employees and/or customers will access.
  - For disinfecting surfaces if other cleaners are not available: 1/3 cup of bleach added to one gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solution.
- ALL employees and customers must wear face masks to help impede the spread of coronavirus. Customers can be required to wear a mask in order to be allowed to enter your establishment, unless the customer notifies you that they have a medical condition such as asthma that prevents them from wearing a mask. You are NOT allowed to ask for proof of the medical condition.
- Important note on gloves: unless you are changing gloves after each transaction and removing gloves properly, the virus could still spread from your hands. The best remedy remains WASHING HANDS.
- EPA's official list of cleaners confirmed to kill COVID: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- **Restroom policy:**
  - Keep restrooms clean and sanitized. Make sure soap and towels are readily available. Hand washing is the most effective thing to protect yourself and others from spreading germs.
  - Hang hand washing literature in the bathroom and post the same cleaning schedule and log in a conspicuous place so customers can see your efforts. The visual also serves as a constant reminder to employees of how serious your business takes the safety of all.

## For Repair Shops:

- ALL employees and customers must wear face masks to help impede the spread of coronavirus. Customers can be required to wear a mask in order to be allowed in to your establishment, unless the customer notifies you that they have a medical condition such as asthma that prevents them from wearing a mask. You are NOT allowed to ask for proof of the medical condition.
- Gloves can be made available to customers and must be made available to employees.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers should be conveniently and prominently located for ease of use by customers and employees in both the customer waiting areas and service bays and storage rooms.
- **Customer Waiting Area:**
  - o Safest is to close customer waiting area completely. Many shops are implementing this and asking customers to wait outside. A doorbell can be installed to alert staff that a customer needs attention. Allow customers to enter one at a time. When one customer departs, another may enter.
  - o If you are not closing the customer waiting area, then keep seating six feet apart.
  - o Take advantage of the nicer weather: The CDC says spread is more difficult outdoors. Have people sit outside now that the weather is nice - purchase lawn chairs or bring some of your waiting room chairs outside to spread people out.
  - o Magazines and information should be removed from the waiting area. Display informational or promotional literature on walls that can't be touched. Keep an inventory of the displayed literature behind counter and give to customers upon request.
  - o All door handles, door knobs, counter surfaces, and furniture should be cleaned on a regular scheduled interval. A log should be conspicuously displayed so that employees and customers can easily see when the most recent cleaning was performed.
- Car interiors must be cleaned and sanitized before returning a vehicle back to your customer. Leave a tag or small sign in vehicle to inform your customer that their vehicle has been sanitized prior to returning it to them.
- Alcohol solutions that contain at least 70 percent alcohol are effective against coronavirus, according to the CDC. For the most part, nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be treated with the exception of leather.
- **Don't use bleach-, ammonia, or hydrogen peroxide-based cleaners on the inside of your customer's car. They will kill coronaviruses on surfaces, but will likely damage the car's upholstery. Ammonia-based cleaners will also damage vehicle touch screens.**

o Leather Interiors: Most car leathers and imitation leathers have urethane coatings for protection, which is safe to clean with alcohol. But over time, cleaning leather with alcohol can leave it susceptible to damage and discoloration (something to note for repeat-customers).

o Note: Most leathers are dyed, and cleaning too vigorously can remove the dye. Above information from the following resource: <https://www.consumerreports.org/tires-car-care/how-to-kill-coronavirus-in-your-car-without-damaging-interior-surfaces/>

- EMV credit card terminals should be accessed by customers only to avoid anyone touching their credit card. If your terminal does not allow for customer insertion of credit cards, then sanitization/disinfecting of credit cards should be performed before handing the customer their card.
- Cash transactions should be completed by placing cash and change on the counter for customers to pick up in order to avoid hand to hand contact.
- Pens should be wiped and sanitized before every use by a customer, and then again once they have completed signing any estimates, repair orders, or credit card receipts.
- Make sure customers know where they cannot go. Use signs/emails/tape or whatever you need to convey the message that you are taking measures to keep customers safe. Notices that customers cannot be in bays, or need to be brought in one at a time.
- Block access to the repair bays by placing a chain across the front where the overhead door would be. Hang a sign in the middle of the chain alerting customers that they are not permitted in the bays and that they must enter through the customer waiting area.
- Consider Plexiglas barriers near the registers/counter.
- Suspend any service to drive customers home or to the office, or to pick them up when their car is repaired. Avoid the close proximity of customers in any vehicle with you or an employee. Pickup and delivery of a customer's car is more appropriate as long as the sanitization guidelines that you establish are performed before returning their vehicle.

## For Convenience Stores:

- ALL employees and customers must wear face masks to help impede the spread of coronavirus. Customers can be required to wear a mask in order to be allowed in to your establishment, unless the customer notifies you that they have a medical condition such as asthma that prevents them from wearing a mask. You are NOT allowed to ask for proof of the medical condition.
- Gloves can be made available to customers and must be made available to employees.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers should be conveniently and prominently located for ease of use by customers and employees. Dispensers should be available immediately upon entering the store, as well as around the store and on all counters.
- Do a walkthrough as if you're a customer. Look at everything a customer touches; from the door handles to get in, to the handles on fridges, the counter and credit card reader, etc. Don't forget the ATM machine. Make a checklist and make sure these places get special attention for cleaning as often as possible.
  - Do the same thing for your employees and areas they touch such as keyboards, cash registers, light switches, phone.
- A log should be conspicuously displayed so that employees and customers can easily see when the most recent cleaning was performed.
- Consider implementing 6 ft. markers by the register to create safe distance
- Consider Plexiglas barriers near the registers/counter
- For coffee stations, provide wrapped stirrer/straws or one-at-a-time dispenser.
  - Cups and lids should also have one-at-a-time dispenser.
- Coffee pots, serving areas, and creamer containers must be constantly cleaned and sanitized. A separate log should be conspicuously displayed so that employees and customers can easily see when the most recent cleaning was performed.
- All self-serve food stations should either be eliminated or replaced with an employee to serve food items such as hot dogs and condiments.
  - If self-serve option is not eliminated, then the same sanitization and log procedures that have been implemented at coffee stations should be used.
- EMV credit card terminals should be accessed by customers only to avoid anyone touching their credit card. If your terminal does not allow for customer insertion of credit cards, then sanitization/disinfecting of credit cards should be performed before handing the customer their card.

- Cash transactions should be completed by placing cash and change on the counter for customers to pick up in order to avoid hand to hand contact.
- Pens should be wiped and sanitized before every use by a customer, and then again once they have completed signing credit card receipts.

## **For the Gas Pumps:**

- ALL attendants must wear face masks to help impede the spread of coronavirus. Customers can be required to wear a mask if they get out of their car, unless the customer notifies you that they have a medical condition such as asthma that prevents them from wearing a mask. You are NOT allowed to ask for proof of the medical condition.
  - An extra precaution would be to provide full pullover face shields as a redundant measure and added layer of protection for both your employee and customer, since it is nearly impossible to social distance while transacting sales at the gas pump.
- Permit customers to insert their credit card directly in to the credit card processing equipment and then return to their vehicle before the attendant pumps the gas. Post signs informing customers of this option.
  - For customers who choose to remain in their car, ask them to roll down the window enough to pass the credit card or cash through to the attendant. Wipe the credit card before returning it to the customer.
- Attendants should wear gloves and should wash their hands regularly.
- Even though customers are not permitted to pump gas themselves, there are plenty that try and are successful. You should have a regular interval for sanitizing the pump nozzles, controls, and keypads. This protects everyone, even if they are wearing gloves. Pumps and keypads should be wiped with disinfectant on a regular interval throughout the shift, and certainly at the end of every shift.