



**Northern Ireland
Executive**

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Current COVID-19 regulations and guidance: what they mean for retail and enclosed shopping centres

New relaxations on social distancing came into effect on 30 September. While these changes removed the requirement for social distancing in retail settings, the Executive reminds sectors of the regulations remaining in law and recommending additional mitigations that should be put in place to limit the risk of transmission.

Your responsibility

It is your responsibility as an employer, business owner or manager of a premise to ensure that you are complying with the current regulations and guidance in place.

The current regulations are available on the Department of Health website at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-protection-coronavirus-restrictions-regulations-northern-ireland-2021>

Keep in mind that some of the restrictions are in law through regulation, while others are guidance. These remain in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and we ask that you continue to protect your customers and your employees by following public health advice.

If you fail to comply with the regulations without reasonable excuse, you are committing an offence. For some offences you may be given a fixed penalty or a fine on summary prosecution.

Current requirements in COVID-19 regulations

Retail settings and enclosed shopping centres must require the wearing of face coverings at all times, unless the person is exempt.

Close contact services must collect customer details to help with the Test, Trace, Protect contact tracing programme.

Recommended mitigations

Retail settings and enclosed shopping centres should take all reasonable measures to manage risk and make sure measures are in place to limit the risk of transmission this includes:

This page is an overview of what you can and cannot do. It is not a definitive statement of the law and should not be relied upon as such.

- hand sanitiser stations
- use of protective screens
- good ventilation
- use of one way systems (if possible)
- minimising close face to face contact
- regular cleaning especially for high contact areas like card machines

Current regulations do not require social distancing however, social distancing remains strongly advised where possible, and should be considered alongside other risk mitigations to limit the risk of transmission.

Social distancing of 1m is still legally required in any areas where food or drink is sold or provided, as these areas come under hospitality regulations.

Retail premises are advised to carry out risk assessments to ensure the appropriate mitigations are in place.

Useful links

- Coronavirus (COVID-19): staying safe while shopping
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-safe-while-shopping>
- Working safely in different business settings
<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-working-safely-different-business-settings>
- COVID-19 Testing <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-testing>
- COVID-19 Compliance and Penalties
<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-compliance-and-penalties>