



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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City of Riverside Creates Additional Protections for Essential Workers

New rules are designed to protect workers in grocery stores, pharmacies and other businesses

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside is reaching out to local grocery stores, pharmacies and other essential businesses to ensure they are aware of measures approved by the City Council this week to protect workers and members of the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council members took the action because grocery stores, farmers markets and pharmacy retail stores have remained open with few mandated restrictions. Fear of food shortages – which have not materialized – at times have driven people to crowd into stores for food and medicine, putting essential workers and the public at a greater risk of contracting the virus.

“This resolution enhances our efforts to safeguard public health by improving safety protections for workers and the customers with whom they interact,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “We are hopeful that a by-product of these measures will be continued accessibility to food and other essential items.”

While some stores adopted the measures on their own, prior to the City Council vote on April 21, the vote makes clear that the precautions are required in Riverside. City officials are preparing materials to explain the rules and will provide the guidelines to affected businesses.

The protections include requiring grocery and pharmacy retail stores to:

- * limit occupancy to 50% of capacity.
- * enforce social distancing requirements by marking floors inside and outside stores with indicators six feet apart.
- * post signs to remind customers and employees of social distancing requirements.
- * provide non-medical face masks and gloves for employees at the employer’s expense.
- * allow employees to wash hands as needed.

- * install Plexiglas shields at all points of sale whenever possible.
- * maintain security onsite to enforce social distancing measures and safeguard employees from unruly customers.
- * inform employees of precautions that will be taken when an employee tests positive for COVID-19.
- * inform affected employees, to the best of their ability without violating HIPPA when a co-worker within a store tests positive for COVID-19.
- * strongly encourage businesses to refuse service to customers who aren't wearing face masks; it is not a requirement that they do so.

The action is the latest by a city, county, state or federal government during the past six weeks designed to slow and limit the spread of the novel coronavirus. The virus has infected more than 900,000 people in the U.S. and is responsible for more than 51,000 deaths in the country. Worldwide, more than 2.75 million people are infected, and more than 194,000 people have died.

Riverside County ranks second in California among counties with COVID-19 infections and has been second or third in deaths per county across the state. Within Riverside County, the City of Riverside has the most infections, with 571, and the most deaths, with 21. Moreno Valley has the second-most cases, with 332 and 12 deaths.

Video of the City Council meeting where this was discussed can be viewed here:

http://riversideca.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=3762

A staff report on the issue can be found at:

<https://riversideca.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=8240768&GUID=D4E6C730-38DC-4C9D-B804-6FC52E827330>

Resources for businesses can be found here: <https://filecloud.riversideca.gov/url/dnujbi7dvwhwtntva>